No. 57 5 CENTS

Young Rough Riders Weekly

MOST FASCINATING WESTERN STORIES

THE YOUNG ROUGH RIDER'S SILENT FOE

or The Hermit of Satan's Gulch

BY NED TAYLOR

At the edge of the precipice, directly over Ted's head, the crazy hermit had rolled a huge rock. He was about to send it crashing down upon the young Rough Rider.

ROUGH RIDER WEEKLY

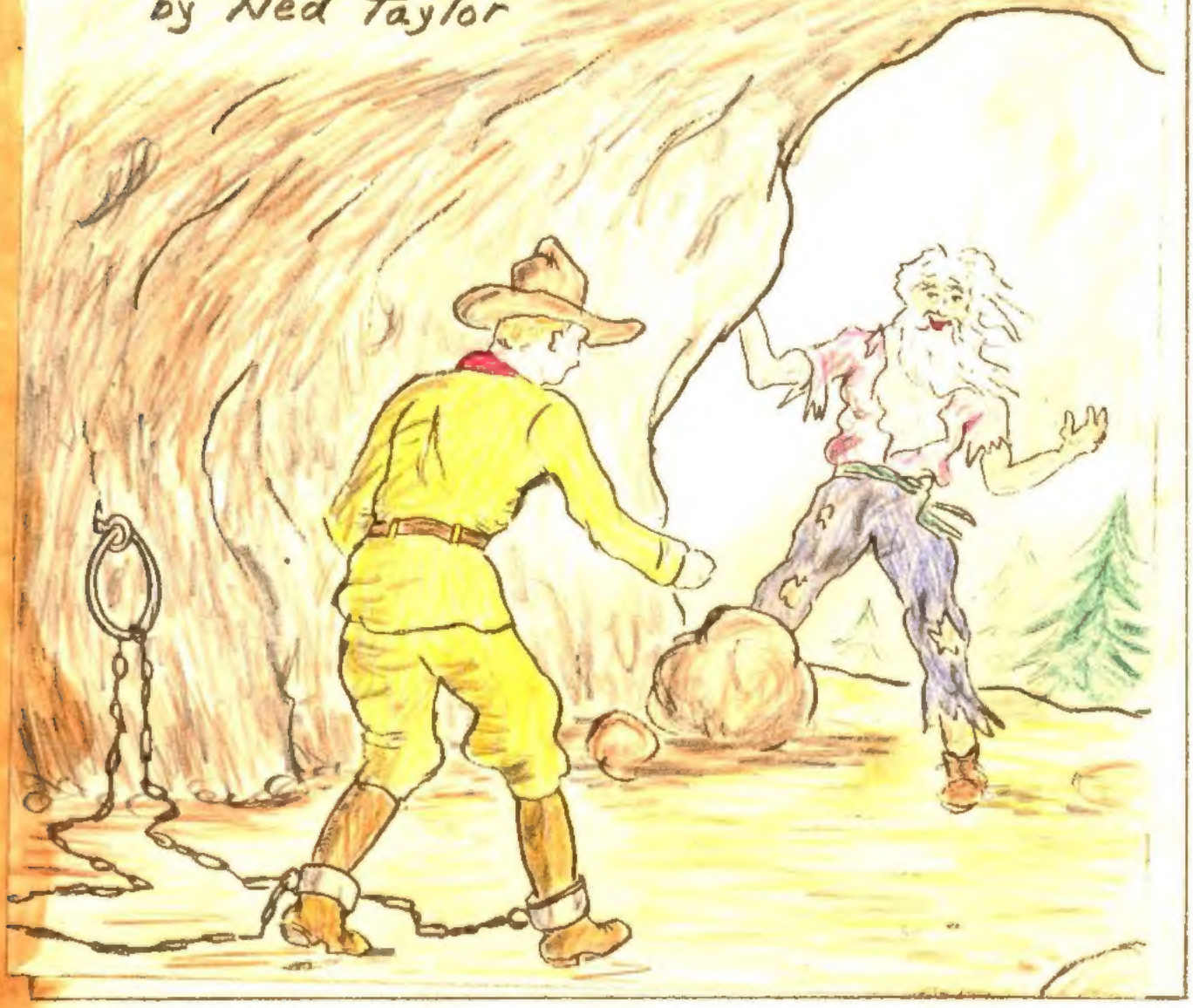
THE BEST WILD WEST STORIES PUBLISHED

No. 57 NEW YORK, MAY 20, 1903 Price Five Cents

THE YOUNG ROUGH RIDER'S SILENT FOE

or, The Hermit of Satan's Gulch.

by Ned Taylor



mond death. Since that experience, he had grown cau-
it such instances, and now just the bare tips of his
"I c d the stirrups.
stumbled horse begin to fall, he would spring from
not bla quickly to one side.
week la en
er, and did not fall. It came down o
ne. Lately lt, which alone, would hav
pposed to be anted, the front
to sell to me. He had tried,
but was never able
ld stay more than
made every p
d have p
out s
ver

to every known tactic in the bucking line, and then it
again changed its tactics.
of our plans ling rapidly in a circle, as if to ke its
ranch, so that we won't n
take as much time as ssary. coming
morrow morning. ll Eto
d's companions
tter was settl

Fascinating Western Stories

Issued Weekly. $2.50 per year. Entered according to Act of Congress in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, N. Y. Application made for Post Office for entry as Second-class Matter.

No. 57. NEW YORK, May 20, Price Five Cents.

The Young Rough Rider's Silent Foe;

OR,

THE HERMIT OF SATAN'S GULCH.

By NED TAYLOR.

CHAPTER I.

TED'S LETTER.

"Don't be in a hurry, Kit. I have a letter in my pocket that I want you to hear me read, just as soon as I have finished eating."

The scene was the large dining room of the Los Animas Ranch house, in Dimmit County, Texas, not far from the Rio Grande River.

In the room were seated four men, three of whom had evidently finished eating a few moments before, for they had left the table. The other young man was still at the table and had just commenced to eat.

The young man who was seated at the table was no other than the young manager of the Los Animas Ranch, Ted Strong, known throughout the West as "the young rough rider."

After leaving the army, Ted had come West to run a ranch, and had formed an organization, which had since become famed all over the country, known as the Young Rough Riders.

Ted was a handsome boy, with brown eyes and hair. His face, an extraordinarily pleasant one, wore a look of determination. At the present time it was flushed, as from recent exercise.

The other three men were well-known members of Ted Strong's company of young rough riders, Bud Morgan, Ben Tremont and Kit Summers.

They were all dressed alike, wearing closely fitting, brown khaki cloth suits, cut military style.

Around the waist of each was buckled a web belt, supporting long-barreled revolvers, bowie knives and cartridges.

Brown sombreros hung on a row of pegs driven into the wall of the room, and showed what manner of head-dress was worn by each of the rough riders. They wore brown leather leggins instead of boots.

Of the four men present, Bud Morgan was the oldest. He was an old-timer in the West, most of his life having been spent on cattle ranges. He had joined the company of young rough riders, however, almost when it had first been organized. n troub

Bud had been a rather rough s acter as old
mtics e the an of
met Ted Strong. He had been squaw you have both
spent much time at the gaming ta osition to offer

[illegible] new mar[illegible]

Bud was [illegible] bstin[illegible] [illegible] his [illegible] [illegible] hen but he had lear[illegible] espect Te[illegible] [illegible] accident[illegible] [illegible], of a nothing that he would not do for [illegible] n of valuable mi[illegible] ins, in the young rough riders. Northern Ida[illegible] of the Columbia River.

Ben Tremont was the strong mar[illegible]. Ben was large and muscular. He was sa[illegible] of the strongest men in the country. He had [illegible] tics in the college in field sports, before graduat[illegible]

"He examined the mine b[illegible] nd found it to contain paying rock, w[illegible] r a long vein.

"The mine had already been wor[illegible] me extent.

"He purchased the mine with wha[illegible] ney he had left of his grandfather's bequest, and start[illegible] to work it. Then his troubles began.

"I'll read you what he says about it. Then I want you boys to tell me just what you think of the proposition he makes."

Ben was slow of speech and also slow [illegible]n. He had been termed lazy many times. But Ben was always active enough when it was necessary.

Kit Summers claimed to be a genuine Westerner by birth, having first seen the light of day in Nebraska, but he had been educated in the East.

Ted Strong had been to Paco that day, to make some necessary purchases and to get the mail. He had returned home quite late for supper. The others had waited for him some time and then gave him up. They had just finished eating when he arrived, but had lingered in the dining room to listen to what news he might have picked up in the little town that day.

Kit Summers had finally started to leave the room when he was detained by Ted with the words which open this story.

As Ted ate his supper he talked:

"You know Bud was saying yesterday that it was beginning to be pretty dull on the ranch here since we had finished the round-up and had sorted out the beeves we intend to market. So it is. I had been expecting to put in a few weeks soon looking over some mining propositions, but I received a letter to-day which interests me. If you boys are of the same mind as myself, we may take a trip that will be pleasant for this time of the year, as well as profitable, with just enough mystery and adventure in store to give it the right flavor."

Of course, all hands were interested, but Ted would not answer any of their questions until he had finished his supper.

When he had pushed back his chair, after having disposed of a hearty meal, he turned to Ben Tremont and asked:

"Ben, do you remember Arthur Maxim?"

"Arty Maxim, the boy we used to call 'Squatty'?" asked Ben.

"Yes, the same fellow. He finished college the year after you graduated, became a mining engineer later and [illegible] West finally. Well, I got a letter from him to-day. [illegible]tter I am going to read. That is, I will read [illegible] to y[illegible] There is a lot of it you won't care [illegible]xplain briefly that Arty seems to [illegible]o hoe since he came West. For

"I hesitated a long time before investing in the Lucky Strike Mine. The owner seemed almost too anxious to sell, and was willing to take a ridiculously low price if the mine proved to be as valuable as it looked. I made a careful examination of the ore, however, and finally invested. A month later I picked up a crew of men at Spokane and took them to my mine. They worked one day. Then every last man, from my foreman down, quit. They refused to again enter the shaft.

"I had built several log cabins close to the shaft for the men to live in. That night, beginning soon after dark, there came from the mine the most dismal sounds that could be imagined. Piercing screams, groans, clinking of chains and shrieks continued all night. With the mine foreman, I entered the shaft of the mine at about midnight, determined to learn the cause of the noises. We had hardly reached the mine level, when our lights were extinguished, as by a sudden rush of air. We were in perfect darkness for about two minutes, during [illegible] we heard groans and rumbling sounds, apparently co[illegible] from further in the mine. Then it suddenly became as light as day. What caused the light I cannot tell. It was a white light.

"As the rocky passage in which we were standing lighted up, our eyes rested upon the most horrible spectacle I ever beheld. It made my blood run cold! A terrible specter, or ghost, stood before us. It was at least seven feet in height, dressed in a white, almost transparent costume. It had the arms and hands of a skeleton. Its face was dark, dry and hard, like that of a mummy. Its teeth protruded, long and sharp, like fangs, and a horrible grin was spread across the thin lips. Its eyes were fiery red, like two flaming coals.

"With a demoniacal laugh, the creature waved its arms wildly in the air, then started directly toward us. It did not seem to move its lower limbs. Rather it seemed to slip toward us as though mounted on castors.

"We turned to escape, and, just as it seemed that the

mon[illegible]d death. Since that experience, he had grown cau-
it sud[illegible] such instances, and now just the bare tips of his
"I c[illegible]ed the stirrups.
stumbled [illegible] horse begin to fall, he would spring from
did not bla[illegible] quickly to one side.
"A week la[illegible] [illegible]en
together, and th[illegible] did not fall. It came down on [illegible] way from
the mine. Lately [illegible]olt, which alone, would have the mine
was supposed to be [illegible]anted, the front feet [illegible]ner was so
anxious to sell to me. He had trie[illegible] [illegible]veral years to
work it, but was never able to get a gang of men together
who would stay more than a day or two.

"I have made every possible examination of the mine passages, and have put forth every effort to solve the mystery, without success. It is beyond me. Unless I can soon discover what agencies are being brought to bear against me to induce me to abandon the mine, I shall have to give it up and lose every cent I have in the world.

"Since I have been in the West, I have heard and read much about your movements. You have been successful in many strange enterprises, and I have confidence that if you were here you could solve this mystery and redeem the reputation of my mine. Can't you come, Ted, you and your friends—your young rough riders?

"This is a delightful part of the country at this time [illegible] and you could combine pleasure with business. I will [illegible] you well for your trouble. I am satisfied that if I could get my mine w[illegible]rked, it would prove one of the most valuable claims in [illegible]e West."

"There is some more to [illegible]e letter," said Ted, as he finished, "but it is merely c[illegible]cerning the location of the mine and how to reach his camp from the nearest railway station. Now, what have you fellows to say about the proposition? Arty Maxim is a good fellow. At one time he did me a great favor, and, while in college, I believe he once saved Ben's life. Ben and I are, therefore, in a way, under obligations to him. For myself, I am anxious to help him out if it is within my power."

"That is my case, too," said Ben. "I will never forget the time Arty pulled me out of the canal when I was tak[illegible] with the cramps. He risked his own life to do this [illegible] and barely escaped drowning. I'm for going to [illegible]p him."

"Any feller as is a friend ter Ted Strong and Ben Tremont is a friend of mine," exclaimed Bud Morgan. "I don't expect that I'd be of much use in finding out about this 'ere ghost affair, but I'm fer helpin' all I can. Ther capting can count on me, yer bet!"

"I guess you fellows know about how I feel," said Kit Summers. "I believe that the young rough riders should always stick together. And, above all, we want to help our friends whenever we can. I don't know this Maxim—never heard of him before—but that doesn't make any difference. I am one of the young rough riders. If a friend of any of the young rough riders needs assistance, it is the duty of every one of the company to turn in and help him all he can. I am willing to start right away."

"Good for you, boys!" exclaimed Ted. "I was sure of our plans [illegible]ling rapidly in a circle, as if to make it[illegible]e ranch, so that we won't [illegible] We can take as much time as is necessary [illegible] coming. [illegible]tart early to-morrow morning. Can you all [illegible] to the [illegible]hen?"

Ted's companions each answered in the affirmative, so the matter was settled.

CHAPTER II.

TED GIVES AN EXHIBITION.

"Whoopee! Now we can git out and stretch our legs."

It was Bud Morgan who spoke, and his glad exclamation was because the journey of the young rough riders by train was at an end.

Ted, Bud, Ben and Kit had just arrived at the town of Sunshine, the nearest railroad station to the mine belonging to Arthur Maxim.

From here they would have nearly fifty miles to ride on horseback to reach the haunted mine.

The young rough riders had brought their horses with them in a special car attached to the passenger trains which had carried them from Texas, and their first attention now was directed toward the unloading of the animals.

The depot at Sunshine was a considerable distance from the town proper, but, notwithstanding this fact, there were a good many loungers about the station.

The horses belonging to the young rough riders were the best to be found anywhere in the West. They were all well-bred, high-strung animals, and the long ride in the box car had made them wild to get out once more in the open air.

As they were taken, one by one, from the car, they playfully kicked up their heels in delight, and, as they were saddled and mounted by their respective owners, the lookers-on, noting their antics, anticipated some rare fun.

They expected to see some of the young rough riders dumped from their mounts.

Ted had noted the significant glances of the loungers, and knew what they were expecting.

Ted resolved to give the rough mountaineers the worth of their money, when it came his turn to mount.

Bud Morgan had already had it out with his horse. The animal had plunged and bucked, tried to roll over in the saddle and gone through all the tricks of an unbroken horse to dismount its rider. The crowd had been greatly entertained, and cheered the old cowboy generously when it was seen at last that he had his horse under subjection.

Kit Summers' horse did not give him as much troub[illegible] as had Bud Morgan's animal. Kit's horse was old[illegible] more staid, still it cut enough antics [illegible] give the [illegible]man of a pretty exhibition. [illegible] squa[illegible] [illegible]nave both

Then Ted's own horse was tak[illegible] [illegible]osition to offer

he did not intend brin[illegible] with him on the trip, but the animal [illegible] ng previous to breaking in the young one [illegible] went lame.

Ted had ridden this young horse several times, and had conquered its spirit to a certain extent, but the young rough rider knew that, after the long ride, his previous work with the horse would count for nothing at all. He would have to break it all over again.

As the animal was led from the car Ted took a glance at the crowd, out of the tail of his eye.

He saw that they were greatly interested, and he knew that they realized, at their first sight of the animal, that there was sure to be fun ahead for them.

Ted was resolved that they should not be disappointed. He would let the horse go through with its complete répertoire of tricks.

Had the rough riders been entirely alone, or on the Texas ranch, Ted would have shortened the coming program considerably. He would have used different tactics with the horse and brought the animal to a state of subjection quickly. He would have saved considerable time, but the effect would have been the same with the horse.

The animal would have been more quickly conquered, but not more thoroughly broken, than by the method Ted now planned to pursue.

The horse was a little stiff from its ride on the cars, and Ted gave it plenty of rope for a few minutes before trying to saddle it.

He allowed it to jump and kick and get the stiffness out of its joints.

Then, as the animal began running at top speed in a circle, with Ted in the center holding the long rope, the young rough rider began gradually drawing in the rope and reducing the circumference of the circle.

At last he had the animal close to him, and, as the horse stopped, Kit Summers quickly approached from the other side of Ted and threw the heavy saddle over its back.

The animal reared and tried to break away, but Ted quickly jerked in on the rope, while Ben Tremont sprang forward and tightened the girth enough to keep the saddle from falling off.

It then took the united efforts of all the rough riders to get the saddle properly secured and the bridle upon the animal, but at last all was ready for Ted to mount.

Ted took the reins securely in his left hand, which he placed upon the animal's neck, close to the pommel of the [illegible]dle.

[illegible] the horse felt the hand of the young rough rider [illegible] neck [illegible]ted to rear up on its hind legs.

[illegible]d to rise, Ted grasped the seat of [illegible]orse, [illegible]nt into [illegible]al's back. [illegible] earth the [illegible], and his feet had found [illegible]

For a se[illegible]al st[illegible]rfectly still, except that its body [illegible] nervously, [illegible]s from a sudden chill.

Its ears were laid flat back against its head, and its angry eyes rolled wickedly. That it was getting ready for a fierce battle, the spectators knew for certain.

"I reckon I know suthin' about horseflesh," Ted heard one of the strangers exclaim, "an' I'm willing ter bet money ther boy don't keep his seat six minutes."

Bud Morgan also heard the remark, and he jumped toward the stranger.

"You're on!" exclaimed the fervent friend of Ted Strong. "Here's an even hundred that my young partner sticks to his saddle until the brute caves."

The stranger flushed when Bud Morgan so quickly called his offer to bet.

"Yer know ther feller, an' I don't," he said. "All ther same, it's my opine he gets throwed. If yer will give me odds I'll take a slice of that roll."

"Suit yerself," returned Bud. "I'll bet ther hundred agin' fifty. How's that suit yer?"

"All right," returned the stranger. "Who will hold ther wad?"

"Hold it yerself," said Bud, generously, and gave the stranger his roll of bills.

Now that one of their number had a bet up, the strangers were all the more interested in the struggle between the young rough rider and the spirited horse.

The animal had stood just half a minute after Ted had got into the saddle. It seemed to be gathering its strength for some desperate move.

Ted knew well what was coming. He held the reins fairly taut and sat easily—carelessly, it seemed with his saddle.

But Ted was on his guard. Not for a second did his eyes leave the horse's ears. He noted every twitch of those ears, and every move of them was a plain signal to him.

When the ears suddenly flapped up quickly, he knew that the animal was ready to begin operations. He tightened the rein a trifle and leaned slightly forward in the saddle.

As he did so, the animal reared again. The horse stood upon its hind legs, so straight up in the air it seemed to the spectators that it would certainly fall over backward and crush the young rough rider under its weight.

Instances have been known where horses have thus fallen over backward and crushed their riders. It had happened once with Ted, when he had been trying to break an unusually willful animal, and he had barely

escaped death. Since that experience, he had grown cautious in such instances, and now just the bare tips of his toes touched the stirrups.

Should the horse begin to fall, he would spring from the saddle and quickly to one side.

But the horse did not fall. It came down on its front feet with a terrible jolt, which, alone, would have unseated an inexperienced rider, and, as its front feet struck the earth its hind feet went high in the air, while its head went down between its two front hoofs.

Then the horse started off at a swift gallop.

Had Ted been upon the broad acres of the Los Animas Ranch just at this time, he would have given the animal its head and kept it on a hard run to tire it out. Once thoroughly tired out, the battle would be more than half won; but just now he did not wish to conquer the horse too easily. He wanted to give the strangers some fun.

He allowed the animal to gallop wildly for a few seconds, but kept the horse traveling in a circle.

While going at full speed, the horse suddenly braced its front hoofs, dropped its head and stopped dead still.

This was a trick which Ted had fully expected and was prepared for.

Instead of sailing on over the animal's head, the form of the young rough rider did not even lurch forward the fraction of an inch, as far as the spectators could judge.

One of the friends of the man who had made the bet with Bud Morgan now began jollying the man.

"Guess yer kin kiss that fifty bucks good-by, Brick," he said, "fer the kid seems ter be a winner now."

"I'm willin' ter acknowledge ther boy is ther best I ever seen straddle a saddle," returned the man addressed as Brick, "but ther beast ain't through with all his tricks yet. I ain't lost ther bet by a long shot, an' even if I do lose, I ain't begrudging ther dust. This 'ere show beats ther fair an' is worth ther money."

Bud Morgan heard the remark, and his mental note was: "B'gosh, thet feller is game. He's all right, an' this 'ere show ain't goin' ter cost him anything, if I do win."

Five or six times the horse endeavored to unseat its young rider by sudden stops, after running for a while at full speed.

Then it changed its program to regular, old-fashioned bucking.

And such bucking!

The animal proved itself a master of the art of stiff-legged horse athletics.

Its back would hump up like that of an angry house cat. Then it would spring in the air and come down in the same position, stiff-legged.

Still Ted kept his seat, a bland smile never for an instant leaving his lips.

For fully five minutes the horse treated the spectators to every known tactic in the bucking line, and then it again changed its tactics.

It began whirling rapidly in a circle, as if to make its rider dizzy.

In an instant Ted knew what was coming. The animal was getting ready to throw itself to the ground. It would roll over and over and thus try to crush its rider.

As the horse began circling both of Ted's feet kicked free of the stirrups, and, a second later, the horse threw itself on its side, Ted jumped quickly to the ground and far enough away from the horse to avoid its kicking heels.

Over and back again the animal rolled, and then, just as it started to get up again, Ted's foot went into the stirrup and he rose with the horse. He was again seated in the saddle, and the smile was still upon his lips.

As the animal regained its feet, the spectators set up a great cheer. In acknowledgment Ted lifted his sombrero and bowed.

The horse was now thoroughly tired out. Its flanks were white with foam and it head drooped in subjection.

Its spirit was broken. Ted rode it back and forth several times, and then finally reined the animal up near the crowd and dismounted.

"B'gosh, stranger, I lost fifty on yer, but I don't care a durn. Ther show was worth it. Yer are the best I ever see in these parts, an' I been here a long time. I'd like ter know yer name."

It was the man who had bet with Bud Morgan who spoke.

Ted did not get a chance to answer, however, for just then Bud pushed forward.

"Stranger," exclaimed Morgan, "yer ain't lost a cent on this 'ere bet of our'n. It would be stealin' ter take ther money, and Bud Morgan ain't no thief. I had a sure thing. Give me back ther hundred and keep yer fifty."

"Not by a durn sight," returned the stranger, "I lost dead fair an' I ain't no man ter holler when I bites inter something I can't chew. No, sir, ther fifty belongs ter you."

"Yer is a square man, all right," was Bud's reply, "but it would be just like taking candy from a baby ter take yer money. It were dead open and shut thet I couldn't lose, so I refuse ter take ther fifty. Yer money ain't good with me."

The stranger was plainly perplexed. He considered that he had lost his bet and seemed anxious [illegible]eit Bud should take the money.

"That's all right," said Ted, as the man looe members him as if asking what course to pursue. [illegible]d and Jack to means what he says, and you can never m[illegible] the fifty, if he says he don't want it." [illegible]e chairman of

"But, durn it all, he won it fair and squa[illegible] you have both man. [illegible]osition to offer

"That's all right," returned Ted. "You do as I say and keep it."

"Yer bet," put in Bud, "ther capting knows yer can't make me finger yer fifty. It's worth more'n fifty ter meet a man as square as yer has proved yerself ter be. They ain't no such men too plenty 'round this part of ther country, I reckon. But yer asked ther capting his name, an', begging his parding for butting in, I'll answer yer question. He ain't nobody else only Ted Strong, an' I reckon yer hev heard of Ted Strong an' his rough riders even up in this 'ere part of ther West."

"Ted Strong!"

The words were chorused by four or five of the strangers, and every eye rested upon the young, handsome man, who had just finished giving them such an exhibition of horsemanship as none of the party had ever seen surpassed.

"Yer bet I hev heard of Ted Strong, the young rough rider," said the man with whom Bud Morgan had laid the wager, "an' if I hed knowed who this young man were on the start I'd never bet my money. I'm powerful glad ter rest my eyes on so famous a man, an' I suppose the rest of you fellers belong ter Ted Strong's famous company of rough riders?"

"Thet we do," returned Bud, who seemed to have taken quite a liking to this stranger, something quite unusual for Bud Morgan on such slight acquaintance, "an' I'll interjuice yer if yer will pass me yer own handle."

"Me? Oh, I'm Jay Davis. The boys call me 'Brick' Davis, 'count of the color of my hair. I'd ruther be called Brick than Jay, I reckon."

Bud, as he had promised, then introduced Davis to the rest of the party of rough riders.

When Davis, on his part, had introduced the rough riders to several of his own friends, he turned to Ted and suddenly said:

"If yer won't think I'm too fresh, I'd like ter ask a favor of yer."

"Fire away," said Ted. "If it's something easy, I'll be glad to accommodate you."

"I understand yer are a crack shot with ther rifle an' fist gun?"

"Yer bet he won't tell ye," put in Bud again, "but I will. He's got 'em all faded."

"Then I want ter take this 'ere fifty, that Morgan wouldn't handle, after he's won it fair and square, an' enter yer in a sharpshootin' contest thet is ter be pulled off at the fair this arternoon," said Brick, addressing Ted.

"Is the animal, fair?" Ted asked.

Ted took [illegible] was the answer. "There is a regular county [illegible] placed upon the [illegible] unshine. This is the last day, and there is to [illegible] middle. [illegible] shooting contest on. All ther crack shots in the [illegible] the horse [illegible] wants ter can enter. Ther entrance fee is [illegible] Ther winner gets back his money and a [illegible] with a diamond setting besides."

"What is the object of the fair?" asked the young rough rider.

"It's fer charity. It were got up ter help ther widows of some miners what got kilt in an explosion in ther No. 20 Mine over in Short Cut Valley."

"And the contest is this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"All right, you may enter me," said Ted, with quick determination, "and now we will bid you adieu until after dinner. Meet me at the hotel as soon as convenient after one o'clock."

If there was anything that Ted Strong delighted in, it was a contest of any kind where skill was needed to win. He looked forward to the shooting match with pleasure.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHOOTING CONTEST.

The rough riders had just finished a hearty dinner and had entered the hotel office, when Brick Davis made his appearance.

"It's all right," was Brick's greeting to Ted. "I paid ther fifty and entered your name just as they were [illegible] in' the list. Ther rifle shooting comes first an' then ther pistol stunts. There are some crack shots entered an' yer can shake hands with yerself if yer win."

Loyal Bud Morgan did not fail to catch up the last sentence.

"Now, look 'ere, Mister Davis," chirped Bud, "I opined yer were a purty good feller, but I'm all-fired afraid I kin see a yeller streak in yer. Ted, he ain't goin' ter lose in this 'ere contest by a long shot. Hear me mutter?"

"I don't want him ter lose," replied Brick, "any more nor you do."

"Well, don't fer a minute doubt thet he'll win. I'm willin' ter bet all ther money I've got as fur as it goes, an' then put up ther clothes off'n my back thet he'll win ther medal," exclaimed Bud.

"Cut it out, Bud," said Ben Tremont. "Ted don't want you to bet. It's a bad habit. Of course, we expect Ted will win, and we know he will win if he has a fair show."

"Well, yer can bet that Ted's going ter have a fair show, all right, all right, fer Bud Morgan—that's me—is going ter be right there with both feet and all his nateral faculties, fer the express purpose of seeing that there ain't no double-cross racket sprung inter the game."

This sally of Bud's caused a general laugh.

"That's all right, Bud," said Ted, "I really do hope to win, and I am sure I will get fair play, as far as that is concerned. But do not be too sanguine of my success. There are some pretty handy men in these parts, and just because I have never been defeated is no sign I will not meet some one more expert than myself here."

This conversation had been going on while the rough

riders were being guided by Brick Davis toward the grounds set apart for the use of the fair.

This was the first fair that had ever been attempted at or near Sunshine, and it was proving a grand success.

Miners, cattlemen and all classes of people traveled for miles to attend it. It had now lasted several days, and this afternoon it would draw to a close.

The fair had naturally attracted a great many men of doubtful character to Sunshine, and a great many men whose characters were well known to be bad.

But the sheriff of the county and the marshal of the town were, happily, first-class officers. They had sworn in a number of deputies and had so far preserved fairly good order.

But this afternoon it was expected the officers would have their severest trials.

Several acres of level, desirable ground at one side of the little town had been set apart for the accommodation of the fair. Here the races had been held and all of the sports and contests.

As the young rough riders and their guide approached the grounds, they saw that a horse race was just being finished and Ted was informed that the rifle contest would soon be on.

Davis introduced Ted to the man who was to have charge of the shooting contests. His name was Lewis Johnson, and he greeted Ted sociably and promised him that there would be no opposition to him, although his entry had been rather tardy.

During the few moments to spare before the contest was announced, Ted thoroughly examined his weapons and ammunition.

Like everything he undertook, Ted's greatest ambition at that particular time was to win the medal. He felt that he was in the best possible trim.

At last he heard the man who was acting as master of ceremonies announce that the next feature on the program for the afternoon would be a rifle and pistol-shooting contest, that there were nine entries, including the best shots of the Northwest.

Then the speaker announced that one of those who had entered was a young man, famous all over the West, who was known as Ted Strong, the young rough rider.

In a few words the speaker called attention to the fact that Ted Strong had the reputation of being the crack shot of the West, but that there were several shooters, who were entered for that day's contest, who disputed that statement, and would endeavor to prove it to be false that afternoon.

As the speaker ceased talking there came cheers and shouts from every part of the crowd.

"Where is the rough rider? Hurrah for Ted Strong! A speech! A speech!"

This was an ovation which had certainly not been expected by Ted. For a moment he hardly knew how to respond, but the cries from the crowd did not cease. They seemed determined to hear Ted's voice.

"Git up on ther stump, Ted, and give them a few wags of your tongue. They want ter see yer,'" said Bud Morgan.

It was plain to be seen the clamoring would not cease until Ted consented to speak. He accordingly mounted a stump near by and held up his hand for silence.

Instantly the crowd was silent. Ted's was a commanding face, albeit a pleasant one. A smile was now upon his lips and the spectators instinctively knew that the words he was about to speak would be pleasant to hear.

In his rich, musical voice, harmonious and clear as a bell, Ted made a few brief remarks, thanking the crowd for its warm welcome. He said in conclusion:

"A few hours ago I had no intention of entering this contest. In fact, it has only been a short time since I learned there was to be a contest of this kind here this afternoon. I was invited to enter and did so. I do not know whether I will win or not, but I am going to try my level best to win that medal."

Ted had made a good impression. The crowd was with him from that minute, and most of the spectators secretly hoped that he would win the medal.

Unlike several other shooting contests in which the young rough rider had taken part in Texas and elsewhere, the nine contestants were divided into three squads, three men in each squad.

The three men of each squad, after going through the tests, retired.

At the end of these trials the winners of each squad were put to more severe tests, and the final winner was to be declared owner of the gold, diamond-set medal.

It chanced that, in drawing lots, Ted found himself one of the contestants in the third squad and it was well along in the afternoon when it came his turn to shoot.

The squad tests with the rifle and revolver were not hard, and the young rough rider soon found himself to be the superior of the other two shooters of his squad.

Then came the struggle of the afternoon. The three squad winners, all of whom had shown about equal skill so far, were to fight for the possession of the medal.

This contest was close and exciting, and, after all the tests arranged for the contest had been used, it was found that Ted and a young man by the name of Jack Raub, a tall, ungainly man, were tied for the possession of the medal.

The committee were unable to discover that either one had showed better skill than the other.

It was a trying situation. The committee members held a short consultation, and then called Ted and Jack to one side.

"We are in a quandary," announced the chairman of the committee, "for in straight shooting you have both proved to be dead shots. We have a proposition to offer

which we hope you will acccept to decide the matter. Will each of you give us an exhibition of trick revolver shooting? The one whom we consider does the neatest and most difficult work, we will name as the winner."

"It suits me all right," exclaimed Raub, it seemed to Ted almost eagerly.

Ted knew in an instant that Raub considered himself a good trick shooter and felt certain in his own mind of winning the medal.

"If that is the case," thought Ted to himself, "I think I can take some of the conceit out of him."

"It is satisfactory as far as I am concerned," replied Ted, to the chairman of the committee. And thus it was arranged and the proper announcement made to the crowd.

CHAPTER IV.

TED MAKES AN ENEMY.

Bud Morgan, Ben Tremont and Kit Summers had been interested spectators of the shooting contests, and when they heard it announced that the tie between Ted Strong and Jack Raub for the possession of the gold medal would be determined by exhibitions of fancy pistol shooting, they felt certain that their young leader would soon be the owner of the medal.

Kit Summers was standing some distance from his companions, back in the crowd, and just after the announcement was made, a remark by one of the bystanders caught his ear.

It was a remark that attracted his attention, and he moved nearer to hear what more might be said. The remark was this:

"I pity Ted Strong if he defeats Jack Raub."

"Why?" inquired the man who had been addressed.

"You know Raub has been considered the crack shot of this country for some years?"

"Yes."

"And you know what kind of a disposition he has?"

"Yes. He is a revengeful cuss. I have heard that he has been known to kill several men with very little reason."

"Now you have struck it. I happen to know that Raub has sworn to take the life of any man who should defeat him in this contest!"

This was the startling sentence that Kit Summers heard.

"Jack Raub must be crazy," returned the man who had been first addressed.

"For my part, I do not think his mind is quite balanced. He ought not to be allowed his liberty."

"Why do not the authorities take him in hand?" was asked.

"That is something I can't answer. Probably, however, it is because no charges have ever been preferred against him. He is as cowardly as he is revengeful. He does not challenge his enemies openly, but creeps upon them unawares, like a Greaser."

"I think Ted Strong should be warned in this matter," said the second man.

"You needn't worry about Ted Strong," said a voice behind the last speaker, "for the young rough rider is fully capable of looking out for himself."

It was Kit Summers who had spoken.

The two men turned when they heard Kit's voice and recognized the boy immediately, by his uniform, as one of the young rough riders.

"I am glad you heard our conversation," said one of the men, "for I fully intended to convey the information to one of your company at the first opportunity."

"I am much obliged to you, gentlemen," replied Kit, "and I will see that Ted is informed, but it is very unlikely that Jack Raub, as you call him, will ever get the opportunity to get revenge upon Ted Strong."

The conversation came to a close here, as it was evident that the two contestants were ready to begin the exhibition. It had been agreed that twenty minutes should be given to each man in which to demonstrate his skill.

Raub was to use the first twenty minutes in showing his tricks, then Ted would come on.

Raub was then to use ten minutes in duplicating, if possible, any tricks introduced by the young rough rider, and then Ted should have the following ten minutes to use in trying to do new tricks introduced by Raub.

From the crowd each man had the privilege of selecting some one to help them in the tricks.

Raub chose his assistant, and then loaded his revolvers preparatory to beginning the exhibition.

Raub gave an exhibition which elicited great applause from the spectators. His work was perfect, but when he had finished the young rough riders knew that the young man had lost. The tricks seemed very ordinary to Ted's companions.

Raub's répertoire consisted of shooting the necks off from beer bottles thrown high in the air, shooting the centers out of the ace of diamonds and ace of hearts, the cards being individually thrown into the air, driving tacks into pine boards and hitting a target bull's-eye at ten paces, with the revolver held upside down.

Ted chose Bud Morgan for his assistant, and began his exhibition as soon as the word was given.

His first number consisted of shooting the necks off from six beer bottles thrown high into the air at once. Bud threw them simultaneously, three with each hand. The feat was accomplished before the bottles struck the ground, and every chamber of Ted's revolver was emptied. Raub had done the same trick with only two bottles.

A ringing cheer from the crowd demonstrated that the spectators were quick to note the superiority of Ted in this one number.

which we hope you will acccept to decide the matter. Will each of you give us an exhibition of trick revolver shooting? The one whom we consider does the neatest and most difficult work, we will name as the winner."

"It suits me all right," exclaimed Raub, it seemed to Ted almost eagerly.

Ted knew in an instant that Raub considered himself a good trick shooter and felt certain in his own mind of winning the medal.

"If that is the case," thought Ted to himself, "I think I can take some of the conceit out of him."

"It is satisfactory as far as I am concerned," replied Ted, to the chairman of the committee. And thus it was arranged and the proper announcement made to the crowd.

CHAPTER IV.

TED MAKES AN ENEMY.

Bud Morgan, Ben Tremont and Kit Summers had been interested spectators of the shooting contests, and when they heard it announced that the tie between Ted Strong and Jack Raub for the possession of the gold medal would be determined by exhibitions of fancy pistol shooting, they felt certain that their young leader would soon be the owner of the medal.

Kit Summers was standing some distance from his companions, back in the crowd, and just after the an nouncement was made, a remark by one of the bystanders caught his ear.

It was a remark that attracted his attention, and he moved nearer to hear what more might be said. The remark was this:

"I pity Ted Strong if he defeats Jack Raub."

"Why?" inquired the man who had been addressed.

"You know Raub has been considered the crack shot of this country for some years?"

"Yes."

"And you know what kind of a disposition he has?"

"Yes. He is a revengeful cuss. I have heard that he has been known to kill several men with very little reason."

"Now you have struck it. I happen to know that Raub has sworn to take the life of any man who should defeat him in this contest!"

This was the startling sentence that Kit Summers heard.

"Jack Raub must be crazy," returned the man who had been first addressed.

"For my part, I do not think his mind is quite balanced. He ought not to be allowed his liberty."

"Why do not the authorities take him in hand?" was asked.

"That is something I can't answer. Probably, however, it is because no charges have ever been preferred against him. He is as cowardly as he is revengeful. He does not challenge his enemies openly, but creeps upon them unawares, like a Greaser."

"I think Ted Strong should be warned in this matter," said the second man.

"You needn't worry about Ted Strong," said a voice behind the last speaker, "for the young rough rider is fully capable of looking out for himself."

It was Kit Summers who had spoken.

The two men turned when they heard Kit's voice and recognized the boy immediately, by his uniform, as one of the young rough riders.

"I am glad you heard our conversation," said one of the men, "for I fully intended to convey the information to one of your company at the first opportunity."

"I am much obliged to you, gentlemen," replied Kit, "and I will see that Ted is informed, but it is very unlikely that Jack Raub, as you call him, will ever get the opportunity to get revenge upon Ted Strong."

The conversation came to a close here, as it was evident that the two contestants were ready to begin the exhibition. It had been agreed that twenty minutes should be given to each man in which to demonstrate his skill.

Raub was to use the first twenty minutes in showing tricks, then Ted would come on.

Raub was then to use ten minutes in duplicating, if possible, any tricks introduced by the young rough rider, and then Ted should have the following ten minutes to use in trying to do new tricks introduced by Raub.

From the crowd each man had the privilege of selecting some one to help them in the tricks.

Raub chose his assistant, and then loaded his revolvers preparatory to beginning the exhibition.

Raub gave an exhibition which elicited great applause from the spectators. His work was perfect, but when he had finished the young rough riders knew that the young man had lost. The tricks seemed very ordinary to Ted's companions.

Raub's répertoire consisted of shooting the necks off from beer bottles thrown high in the air, shooting the centers out of the ace of diamonds and ace of hearts, the cards being individually thrown into the air, driving tacks into pine boards and hitting a target bull's-eye at ten paces, with the revolver held upside down.

Ted chose Bud Morgan for his assistant, and began his exhibition as soon as the word was given.

His first number consisted of shooting the necks off from six beer bottles thrown high into the air at once. Bud threw them simultaneously, three with each hand. The feat was accomplished before the bottles struck the ground, and every chamber of Ted's revolver was emptied. Raub had done the same trick with only two bottles.

A ringing cheer from the crowd demonstrated that the spectators were quick to note the superiority of Ted in this one number.

Ted's next number was an improvement on Raub's card-trick shooting.

Twenty cards were used by Ted, among them being the four aces.

Ted used two revolvers in the trick, and, as Bud threw the twenty cards in the air, the quick eye of the young rough rider singled out the aces and his bullets neatly cut a hole in the center of each.

The crowd did not cheer this time, but the silence was more significant than a loud ovation. The spectators were amazed.

Had Ted stopped right then, he would have been awarded the medal, but, now that he was in form, he decided to give the spectators the worth of their money.

Ted's request for twenty-six army hard-tacks was granted.

Standing at ten paces, Bud Morgan held the large, hard crackers between his thumb and forefinger, one at a time, while with two revolvers, being fired alternately, Ted shot outlines of the twenty-six letters of the English alphabet in them.

Each hard-tack, when he was through, had a letter outlined by bullet holes in it.

This was a trick that Ted had mastered by long practice. He had practiced it so much during idle moments on the Los Animas Ranch that he could almost do it with his eyes shut.

It seemed wonderful work to the spectators, and the crowd went almost wild with delight.

"Yer hev ther medal cinched, Ted," whispered Bud, while the crowd was cheering. "What's the use of wasting any more cartridges?"

"I'll give them one more," replied Ted, "the tin-can trick."

The tin-can trick was the most difficult trick of revolver shooting that Ted had ever attempted. It had been the hardest for him to master, but he had finally perfected it.

There was some delay while a perfect, empty tin can was found.

It happened to be a round tomato can that was handed to the young rough rider at last. Ted quickly took the colored paper off, leaving the bright tin in view.

The young rough rider then selected a perfectly level space, several rods square, and placed the can upon the ground upon its side.

The crowd, curious to know what Ted intended to do, pressed close around the spot.

"Say, young feller, what's ther trick?" asked a voice in the crowd.

This gave Ted an opportunity to explain.

"The trick is to chase this tomato can twice around this circle by shooting under it. I will use three revolvers, shooting six shots with each. If I do the trick perfectly, the can will not stop rolling until after the last shot is fired, and there will not be a bullet hole in it."

"Say, ain't yer givin' us a kid? How kin yer shoot at ther can without there bein' no bullet holes in it?"

Ted smiled.

"My idea," he said, "is to fire each bullet so that the edge of the bullet touches the side of the can just enough to keep it rolling. If there is a hole in the can it will show that my aim was inaccurate."

Ted borrowed Bud's revolver and placed it loosely in his own belt. Then he began firing.

The can rolled rapidly around in a circle, while Ted's weapons kept spitting out the leaden plugs.

There seemed to be not the slightest variation in the shots, even when Ted exchanged the empty revolver for the loaded one.

When the can ceased rolling a dozen hands were thrust forward to pick it up for examination.

It was quickly passed from one person to another in the crowd, and there were many exclamations of astonishment. The can had not been once punctured, but there were scratches upon the tin showing where the bullets had scraped it.

Ted's time was up, and the master of ceremonies called for the appearance of Raub, who was to have ten minutes to duplicate Ted's new tricks. But Raub could not be found.

It was finally announced, by several men in the crowd, that Jack had given up and had gone away.

The man had realized that he stood no show against the young rough rider when it came to fancy shooting, and had left the grounds.

Amid the delighted cheers of the crowd, the gold medal was presented to Ted, and for half an hour the spectators crowded about him for the purpose of shaking his hand and examining the medal.

The fifty dollars was handed to Ted, and he at once returned it to Davis.

As Ted handed the money to Davis, Brick, in turn, handed the young rough rider a slip of paper.

"What is it?" asked Ted, as he took the paper.

"Jack Raub handed it to me just before he left, and told me to see that you got it," replied Davis.

Ted unfolded the paper. He read the following words written in pencil:

"You are as good as dead! J. RAUB."

"This is something I do not understand," said Ted, handing the paper to Kit Summers, who happened to be standing nearest him.

Kit glanced at the note, and then said: "I understand it, Ted, and will explain it to you as soon as we reach the hotel."

"All right," replied the young rough rider, betraying not the least curiosity. But he knew that Kit had something of importance to communicate, which he did not desire to speak of in the presence of the crowd, which was now taking up Ted's attention.

The young rough riders did not leave the grounds immediately, as there were several other interesting features on the program for that afternoon, and they wished to see the fun.

CHAPTER V.

TED'S SILENT FOE.

The young rough riders loitered about the fair grounds until darkness had set in. The program for the afternoon was a long one, and, it being the last day of the fair, the committee in charge were anxious to clean up every number on the program. There were a number of foot races, and these were finished after dark.

A display of fireworks was scheduled for the evening, and the young rough riders concluded not to return to the hotel for supper. They, therefore, procured a lunch at a stand on the fair grounds, and then prepared to put in an evening of enjoyment.

Just as the young rough riders had finished eating, one of the local men in charge of the fair approached the stand where Ted, with his companions, had been eating.

"Mr. Strong," inquired the man, "do you know anything about fireworks?"

"I used to help fire them off during my college days," replied Ted. "Have you run up against something you don't understand?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Our fireworks were shipped from the East, and we have a big bundle of new-fangled rockets which none of us know how to handle. Would it be asking too much of you to look them over and see if you can make head and tail of them?"

"By no means," was Ted's reply. "I will be glad to assist you, if I am able."

Telling his companions where he was going, the young rough rider left them and accompanied the man.

With the assistance of the young rough rider, the manner in which the rockets should be touched off was soon determined, and, a little later, the display commenced.

Ted did not go far from the seat of the operations, thinking he might perhaps be needed to further assist.

About half of the fireworks had been ignited, when the crowd was suddenly attracted by the alarming ringing of a church bell in Sunshine.

A minute later they heard the cry of "Fire!"

Then above the tree tops arose a great column of black smoke, and the sky was lighted by a large blaze.

In a body, it seemed, the people who had been watching the fireworks started toward the town.

The grounds were soon vacated. Everybody was rushing toward the place where the fire seemed to be.

Ted sprang to the top of a large box, in which some the fireworks had been shipped, and tried to single out 'm the crowd his companions, but he caught no glimpse hi any of them.

"Some of the rockets must have landed in the town and started the blaze," Ted muttered to himself.

Then he leaped to the ground and started himself toward the village.

He was one of the last to leave the grounds.

The road leading from the fair grounds to the town skirted a small, but dense, piece of woods, to the right and to the left was a steep, precipitous bluff.

The road ahead of Ted was choked with people trying to hurry toward the fire.

In order to save time, Ted concluded to cut into the woods, thinking he could thus make better time.

He found he had made a mistake, however, a moment later, for the trees were close together, and the undergrowth was too thick for fast traveling.

After stumbling along in the darkness for a few rods, Ted concluded to retrace his steps, get back in the road and follow the crowd.

Just as he reached the edge of the timber, Ted's foot caught in a tangled growth of underbrush, and, before he could catch himself, he fell on the ground at full length.

As the young rough rider fell, a dark form jumped from behind a large tree, holding in its hands a rifle, uplifted like a club.

Before Ted had time to rise, the dark individual brought the gun down upon the head of the young rough rider with tremendous force.

Ted lay like one dead, while his assaulter carefully stooped over the prostrate form, for the evident purpose of ascertaining the effect of the blow.

It was probably several hours later that Ted returned to consciousness.

He found that he was blindfolded and that he had been tied hand and foot, and to the back of a strange horse.

The animal was moving, and sounds of a second horse's hoof beats told Ted that the animal he was upon was being led.

Ted was not gagged, and he ventured to ask, after riding some distance and fully recovering his senses: "Where are you taking me?"

There was no answer.

Thinking he had not been heard, Ted raised his voice to a loud yell.

"Hey, there, I say, where are you taking me?"

No answer.

"Say, can't you hear my question?"

Still no answer.

Ted began to wonder if he was in the power of a deaf and dumb man. He made several other attempts at asking questions, but only the hoof beats of the two traveling horses and his own voice broke the silence.

CHAPTER VI.

BUD AND BEN TAKE A TRAIL.

"What's thet? Yer say ther young boss didn't come to ther hotel last night?"

It was Bud Morgan who was talking.

With Kit Summers and Ben Tremont, he was standing at the desk in the hotel office of Sunshine.

His remarks were addressed to the clerk.

On getting up the next morning after the fire, Bud had been the first to notice that Ted was not in the hotel office, but he supposed that, owing to the strenuous work and excitement of the previous night, Ted had not yet awakened. It was yet early in the morning.

Bud had supposed that Ted had been one of the first of the spectators to reach the fire. He had worked hard himself to save the burning building, which was occupied as a general store, and, while he had not seen Ted, he had supposed him to be somewhere on the street.

None of the young rough riders had arrived at the hotel at the same time the previous evening, and each had secured a separate room and had retired as soon as he reached the hotel.

It was, therefore, not strange that the young leader had not been missed that night.

Bud waited for over an hour in the hotel office for the appearance of the young rough rider. The breakfast hour was nearly over.

Then Bud called the attention of Kit and Ben to the fact that Ted was oversleeping and liable to miss a full meal.

They had also missed Ted, but had accounted for his nonappearance the same way that Bud had figured it out.

"Do you think I had better call him?" asked Bud.

Both Ben and Kit answered in the affirmative.

Bud then approached the desk and asked the clerk the number of the room occupied by Ted Strong.

The clerk glanced at the names on the register, and then made the astonishing statement which caused Bud to utter the questions with which this chapter begins:

"Mr. Strong did not sleep here last night."

"Were you on duty all the evening?" asked Kit Summers.

"Yes, my hours are from eight in the evening until nine in the morning," replied the clerk.

"And was there no message left here for any of us?" asked Kit, repeating the names of his two companions and himself.

"There was no message for any of you three," was the reply, "but there is a message here for Mr. Strong. It was delivered last evening."

"We are his friends," said Ben Tremont, "may we see the message? We are afraid our captain has met with foul play. We cannot account for his not coming to the hotel last night. If it was in his power, he would have either arrived here or have sent us a message explaining his absence."

The clerk handed Ben a sealed envelope, which was addressed thus:

"To Ted Strong, Sunshine, care of Miners' Hotel."

Ben at once recognized the handwriting of Arthur Maxim.

"The letter is from Maxim," he said, addressing his companions. "Shall I open it? It may give a clew to Ted's whereabouts."

Under the circumstances, it was decided to open the letter.

They found the letter to be a very short one—only a few words.

"You should arrive in Sunshine by to-morrow or next day. If this letter finds you already there, wait for me. I will arrive at the hotel Friday to guide you to the Lucky Strike Mine. ARTY."

"Why, this is Friday," remarked Kit Summers.

"Yes, the letter must have been delayed," replied Ben.

"Well, ther letter don't explain nothing about where ther young capting has gone ter," said Bud Morgan. "I'm fer lookin' him up. But, how in sandhill be we ter know where ter look?"

"Boys," announced Kit Summers, "I have some information which may help in solving the question. It is something I would have told you all before had I had an opportunity."

Kit's face wore a very grave, sad look.

He was thinking of the threat that Jack Raub had been said to have made—that he would kill any man who won the shooting contest from him—and of the message Ted had received from the tall, ungainly man after the young rough rider had been presented with the medal.

Kit now took his two friends to one side and told them of what he had overheard.

"An' yer think ther long-continued galoot has made away with our young capting?" asked Bud Morgan, his voice trembling and a suspicious moisture noticeable in his eyes.

"Let us hope not," replied Kit, his tones also tremulous and his countenance very grave.

Ben Tremont's face did not so plainly picture the emotions which he felt, but it was plain that he, too, regarded the situation as a very grave one, after hearing what Kit had to say.

"I'll tell yer one thing," exclaimed Bud, finally, "an' that is that Bud Morgan ain't never goin' ter rest until he has this question settled. An' if I finds out that one hair of ther young capting's head has been so much as kinked by this 'ere fresh cuss, as is called Jack Raub, this same cuss will start on ther long trip. If Ted is alive, I'll find him, and if he's been killed——"

"We are with you, Bud, clear to the end of the

trail," cut in Kit Summers, "but we have to go about the matter sensibly, so as to make no mistakes."

"It is just possible, you know," said Ben Tremont, "that this man Raub has nothing to do with Ted's disappearance."

"Just the same," said Kit, "I'm willing to bet money that Raub has a hand in this matter."

"So am I," returned Ben, "but I merely said, for the purpose of covering the points in the case, that it is just possible that the tall man is not guilty."

"Well, he seems ter be about all ther start we have ter begin with," remarked Bud; "an' I think ther best plan would be ter look him up first thing, eh?"

"You won't have to go far to get track of Jack Raub!"

That was Kit Summers' sudden exclamation just at that point, and, as Kit spoke, he pointed through the open window toward the street.

Bud and Ben followed his gaze.

Surely enough, directly across the street they saw Raub just about to enter a saloon!

The man had dismounted from the horse which he had ridden up to the door of the saloon, and had tied the animal to a post set at the edge of the street.

"He's been taking a long ride," remarked Bud, gazing at the horse.

The animal surely bore evidences of having been ridden hard. Its flanks were flecked with perspiration. Its mouth was dripping lather, and the animal stood with its head drooped, as if thoroughly tired out.

"To my mind," said Kit Summers, "that horse is evidence that Jack Raub must have been riding most of the night. I believe now, more than ever, that he had considerable to do with Ted's disappearance. Let us decide quickly what move we will make, before Raub comes from the saloon."

"I know, durn well, what I'm goin' ter do," said Bud Morgan, suddenly starting to his feet.

"What is it, Bud?" asked Kit and Ben together.

"I'm going ter get my cayuse saddled, and, when thet feller starts out, it's me right arter him. I'm going ter foller him, 'ithout his getting next ter ther fact, until I am dead sartin he either does, or don't, know ther whereabouts of Ted Strong."

"Good for you, Bud! That's the right talk!"

Ben was the one who spoke. Bud had a strange temperament, and when he had first announced his intention of making some move, Ben was afraid Bud's impetuosity would lead him to go straight across the road to the saloon and attack Raub, with an idea of making him confess what had happened to Ted.

Ben knew that such a proceeding would be rash, indeed, and probably spoil their plans altogether.

He knew that Raub would confess to know nothing of the whereabouts of Ted Strong, and stick to it. They would then have no way of proving that Raub had been instrumental in causing Ted's disappearance.

But when Ben heard Bud's plan of procedure, he knew that Bud had control of whatever impulse he might have had when he first saw Raub.

Ben approved heartily of Bud's plan, but he did not think it advisable for all three of them to go on the errand Bud had suggested.

He was about to propose to Kit to stay at the hotel, while Bud and himself followed Raub, in order to notify Ted of the means taken to find him, should Ted happen to turn up during the day.

But, before he could broach the subject, a roughly dressed but smooth-faced, intelligent-appearing young man approached the party.

The stranger's arm was extended toward Ben.

"Hello, Ben, old boy! Glad to see you are here. Where is Ted?"

Ben jumped quickly to his feet and grasped the outstretched hand of the newcomer.

"You have got here just in time, Arty," he exclaimed. "Ted has mysteriously disappeared."

Then Ben introduced the man to his companions as Arty Maxim, the young mine owner, whom they had journeyed from Texas to assist.

After the introductions, Ben lost no time in telling Maxim the particulars of Ted's disappearance.

"And so you think Jack Raub has something to do with Ted's misfortune, if such it proves to be?" asked Arty.

"Yes, reasonably certain."

"I know of this man Raub," said Maxim, "and I do not believe his mind is just right. I would not wonder at all if your suspicions prove correct. Raub owns a miner's claim in the same gulch in which my haunted mine is located. It is called Satan's Gulch. But his claim is twenty miles nearer Sunshine than my own. It is not a valuable mine, as I understand, and he has been working it slowly by himself. He lives there alone most of the time. If he has made Ted a prisoner and not killed him, it is just possible he has him confined at or near his mine."

"That is a good suggestion," said Kit, "and it puts an idea into my head. Suppose, Ben, that you and Bud follow Raub, as Bud proposed, while Maxim and myself travel to Raub's mine and see if we can find Ted anywhere around there?"

"Now you are talking!" Ben exclaimed, and, without further parley, he and Morgan started for the stable to get their horses ready.

In the meantime, Kit procured from the hotel cook a supply of cooked provisions for Ben and Bud to take with them—enough to last several days.

As Ben and Bud, mounted and ready for the journey,

rode around to the front of the hotel, Kit met them and exclaimed:

"You're just in time, Raub just came out of the saloon a moment ago, got on his horse and started north. He just entered that path leading through the woods."

Ben and Bud took the packages of food handed to them by Kit, tied the parcels to their saddle thongs and galloped off in the direction taken by the man they suspected of having either killed or kidnaped their young captain, Ted Strong.

A short time after the departure of Ben Tremont and Bud Morgan, Kit Summers and Arty Maxim mounted their horses, preparatory to starting for the vicinity of Raub's claim.

Just as they were ready to start Brick Davis rode up to the hotel. He appeared to be equipped for a long ride.

"I'm going way up inter ther mountains," was his greeting to Kit, "and I thought I'd just call a minute to bid you fellows good-by."

"They are all gone but me," said Kit. "Which way are you going?"

"Way up to the north end of Satan's Gulch," was the reply.

"That's the direction we're headed for," announced Kit, "and we'd be pleased to have you jog along with us."

"Hurrah! I'm with yer," exclaimed Brick, and in a few minutes the three were loping along the hard-beaten trail leading northward, in the same direction taken by Bud and Ben less than half an hour before.

When well started on the journey, Kit told Brick all about the mysterious disappearance of Ted Strong, of their suspicions concerning Jack Raub's being mixed up with the case and the reasons for those suspicions.

Brick was surprised, but he shook his head knowingly as Kit told the story.

"That there Raub is jest ther feller ter do up Ted Strong ter beatin' him in ther shootin' contest, if he got ther chanst," said Davis. "It's dollars ter doughnuts thet he dealt ther hand all right, an' say, yer can count on Brick Davis ter stick with you fellers until we find yer young partner. I'm dead stuck on that boy. He's ther squarest feller I seen in a long time."

Kit's glance at Davis' face told him the man was sincere, and he thanked Brick warmly for his offer of assistance and accepted it.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CRAZY HERMIT.

Blindfolded as he was, and, probably for several hours unconscious, Ted had lost all track of time or distance.

He could not tell whether or not it was still dark, his eyes had been so densely covered.

And he did not know how long he had been unconscious or how long he had been riding, tied to the strange horse.

Several times during the ride he asked questions, but no answers were received.

The man in whose power he was seemed to be either deaf or disinclined to talk.

It was a silent ride. The very silence added to the terrors of it.

Ted would have felt much easier had his silent foe spent the time in making terrible threats.

As it was, he had no idea whether the man was old or young, or whether his enemy's intention was to kill him or hold him a prisoner.

Then Ted thought of the mysterious note he had received from Jack Raub, which read:

"You are as good as dead!"

Could Raub have taken offense at him because he had honestly and fairly won the gold medal in the shooting contest?

It hardly seemed possible to Ted that such could be the case, yet, taking into consideration the message and the absence of facts to support any other theory, Ted was inclined to believe that he was then in the power of Jack Raub.

But, if so, why did Raub refuse to speak?

Perhaps Raub wished to torture his prisoner by keeping him in suspense.

These thoughts and others flitted through Ted's mind as the wearisome journey continued.

Ted knew by the nature of the ground, the windings, the up and down grades, that the trail followed was through the mountains, but he had no idea of the direction being taken.

Finally Ted resolved to persuade his captor to speak —to surprise Raub, if he it proved to be, into uttering at least some exclamation.

"Say, Raub, hasn't this Quaker meeting lasted about long enough? Open your mouth and sing a hymn, if you don't feel like talking religion or politics," said Ted, suddenly.

If Ted had hoped to surprise his foe into saying something, the young rough rider was disappointed.

Complete silence, as usual, followed Ted's sally.

Then Ted gave up trying to make the man talk.

To keep up his spirits and let his enemy know he was not afraid, Ted began singing. At first he sang a few old songs, and then he let his rich baritone voice out in singing snatches from popular operas.

If his enemy heard the music, he made no comments, nor was any effort made to induce Ted to cease his singing.

By this Ted knew that they were far away from any settlement and riding along some trail seldom used.

For an hour or more Ted amused himself and bolstered

up his spirits by singing. He was right in the middle of a favorite selection, when the horse he was riding came to a sudden halt.

He could hear sounds, indicating that his enemy had dismounted and was moving about several rods ahead on foot.

Then the horse upon which Ted was tied was led forward a short distance and again halted.

Ted's feet were cut loose, and the young rough rider was suddenly jerked sideways, nearly off from the horse.

His hands being tied, Ted lost his balance, but by accident, more than otherwise, he managed to land on his feet.

Ted was then led a short distance, and, a second later, he felt iron bracelets being snapped to his ankles.

Then the handkerchief which had bound his eyes was suddenly snatched away and the cords which had tied his hands were cut with the quick slash of a knife at the same moment.

Ted found himself standing in a small cave in the side of a mountain.

In front of the cave was a wide ledge of rock.

Beyond this ledge there seemed to be a high precipice.

From Ted's position he could see, through the opening of the cave, a wide gulch or valley, which seemed to stretch away for miles.

But where was his enemy?

As the handkerchief had been snatched from his eyes, Ted had heard quick, retreating footsteps, and he glanced hurriedly around. But he only got a glimpse of his pursuer's boot heel and a brass spur.

The man who had the young rough rider in his power had passed beyond the shelter of some rocks which skirted the entrance to the narrow, shallow cave.

Ted then examined his fastenings.

His hands were free, but his weapons were gone. Even the medal which he had won in the shooting contest had been removed from his shirt front.

Ted found that his feet were bound by two heavy bands of iron, which closely fitted his ankles. A heavy padlock secured these bands. The bands were hinged much like the old-fashioned handcuffs used on the wrists.

To iron loops on the sides of the ankle bands had been forged the two end links of a heavy, iron chain, and this chain passed from one ankle, through a large, iron ring set into the rocky wall of the cave, to the other foot.

The chain was about fifteen feet in length, and Ted found that with difficulty he could move to nearly every part of the shallow cave. But he could not get closer than within several feet of the entrance.

Link by link Ted examined the chain, hoping to find a weak spot in some one of them, but each link seemed perfectly made.

The young rough rider examined the padlocks. He soon knew that he would be unable to unlock them without the proper keys.

The ring in the wall could not be budged without tools.

For the second time, Ted was going carefully over the links of the heavy chain when he was suddenly startled by a cackling laugh at the entrance to the cave.

He looked quickly up, and what he saw was truly astonishing.

Right in the mouth of the cave stood an old. white-haired man—a man, surely, although the individual appeared more like an apparition than a human being.

The wild, saneless look in the sunken eyes and the fiendish grin upon the face of Ted's visitor told the young rough rider plainly that the old man was crazy.

The man's hair, frowzy and long, was as white as snow, as was also his long, shaggy beard, that fell to his waist.

His clothes were ragged, and his skinny shoulders, elbows and knees protruded through the rents in his garments and showed brown and dry, like the skin of a mummy.

From the grinning lips protruded two long, yellow, fanglike upper teeth. But for these, the old man appeared to be toothless.

As Ted raised his head, the maniac repeated his cackling laugh and his fiendish grin widened.

Ted gazed upon the horrible picture before him for a moment, and then asked: "Are you the person who brought me here?"

Another chuckling laugh was Ted's only answer.

The man seemed greatly amused at Ted's words, however. He stood motionless, looking at the helpless lad as if he was beholding some strange and amusing specimen, the like of which he had never seen before.

Ted repeated his question a trifle louder.

This time a fain glimmer of reason came into the man's eyes. He seemed for a moment to realize that a question was being asked. He came a step nearer.

Ted was quick to take advantage of the change in the man's actions. He repeated his question again, nearly as loudly as he could speak, without actually yelling.

"Bring you here?" repeated the man after Ted this time. And then the crazy creature placed a bony finger against his head and seemed to be thinking deeply.

"I say," repeated Ted for the third or fourth time, "are you the person who brought me here?"

This time the maniac seemed to understand what Ted had said, and he answered, quickly:

"Me? I am the great Napoleon Bonaparte. I did not bring you here. No, no, no, not I. It was you, you, who brought me here. I am in exile. I will die here at St. Helena. Yes, I, Napoleon Bonaparte, the greatest general history will ever know, will die here in these mountains, alone. And I will be buried here, unwept, unhon-

up his spirits by singing. He was right in the middle of a favorite selection, when the horse he was riding came to a sudden halt.

He could hear sounds, indicating that his enemy had dismounted and was moving about several rods ahead on foot.

Then the horse upon which Ted was tied was led forward a short distance and again halted.

Ted's feet were cut loose, and the young rough rider was suddenly jerked sideways, nearly off from the horse.

His hands being tied, Ted lost his balance, but by accident, more than otherwise, he managed to land on his feet.

Ted was then led a short distance, and, a second later, he felt iron bracelets being snapped to his ankles.

Then the handkerchief which had bound his eyes was suddenly snatched away and the cords which had tied his hands were cut with the quick slash of a knife at the same moment.

Ted found himself standing in a small cave in the side of a mountain.

In front of the cave was a wide ledge of rock.

Beyond this ledge there seemed to be a high precipice.

From Ted's position he could see, through the opening of the cave, a wide gulch or valley, which seemed to stretch away for miles.

But where was his enemy?

As the handkerchief had been snatched from his eyes, Ted had heard quick, retreating footsteps, and he glanced hurriedly around. But he only got a glimpse of his pursuer's boot heel and a brass spur.

The man who had the young rough rider in his power had passed beyond the shelter of some rocks which skirted the entrance to the narrow, shallow cave.

Ted then examined his fastenings.

His hands were free, but his weapons were gone. Even the medal which he had won in the shooting contest had been removed from his shirt front.

Ted found that his feet were bound by two heavy bands of iron, which closely fitted his ankles. A heavy padlock secured these bands. The bands were hinged much like the old-fashioned handcuffs used on the wrists.

To iron loops on the sides of the ankle bands had been forged the two end links of a heavy, iron chain, and this chain passed from one ankle, through a large, iron ring set into the rocky wall of the cave, to the other foot.

The chain was about fifteen feet in length, and Ted found that with difficulty he could move to nearly every part of the shallow cave. But he could not get closer than within several feet of the entrance.

Link by link Ted examined the chain, hoping to find a weak spot in some one of them, but each link seemed perfectly made.

The young rough rider examined the padlocks. He soon knew that he would be unable to unlock them without the proper keys.

The ring in the wall could not be budged without tools.

For the second time, Ted was going carefully over the links of the heavy chain when he was suddenly startled by a cackling laugh at the entrance to the cave.

He looked quickly up, and what he saw was truly astonishing.

Right in the mouth of the cave stood an old. white-haired man—a man, surely, although the individual appeared more like an apparition than a human being.

The wild, saneless look in the sunken eyes and the fiendish grin upon the face of Ted's visitor told the young rough rider plainly that the old man was crazy.

The man's hair, frowzy and long, was as white as snow, as was also his long, shaggy beard, that fell to his waist.

His clothes were ragged, and his skinny shoulders, elbows and knees protruded through the rents in his garments and showed brown and dry, like the skin of a mummy.

From the grinning lips protruded two long, yellow, fanglike upper teeth. But for these, the old man appeared to be toothless.

As Ted raised his head, the maniac repeated his cackling laugh and his fiendish grin widened.

Ted gazed upon the horrible picture before him for a moment, and then asked: "Are you the person who brought me here?"

Another chuckling laugh was Ted's only answer.

The man seemed greatly amused at Ted's words, however. He stood motionless, looking at the helpless lad as if he was beholding some strange and amusing specimen, the like of which he had never seen before.

Ted repeated his question a trifle louder.

This time a fain glimmer of reason came into the man's eyes. He seemed for a moment to realize that a question was being asked. He came a step nearer.

Ted was quick to take advantage of the change in the man's actions. He repeated his question again, nearly as loudly as he could speak, without actually yelling.

"Bring you here?" repeated the man after Ted this time. And then the crazy creature placed a bony finger against his head and seemed to be thinking deeply.

"I say," repeated Ted for the third or fourth time, "are you the person who brought me here?"

This time the maniac seemed to understand what Ted had said, and he answered, quickly:

"Me? I am the great Napoleon Bonaparte. I did not bring you here. No, no, no, not I. It was you, you, who brought me here. I am in exile. I will die here at St. Helena. Yes, I, Napoleon Bonaparte, the greatest general history will ever know, will die here in these mountains, alone. And I will be buried here, unwept, unhon-

ored and unsung. Ah, my young man—not unsung. You can sing?"

The madman had not raved as he uttered the foregoing sentences. He had delivered his words in a cracked, harsh tone, that almost set Ted's teeth on edge.

As he asked Ted if he could sing, the man's eyes glittered dangerously and his long, knotted forefinger pointed straight at the young rough rider menacingly, as if forbidding him to deny his ability to sign.

Ted met the maniac's gaze squarely and coolly.

Ted was in a helpless position, entirely at the mercy of the maniac, should the man take a notion to become violent. Ted thought it best to humor his visitor.

"Sure, I can sing," was Ted's answer. "Would you like to hear me try it?"

"Raise up your voice for the amusement of the great Napoleon. If it is satisfactory, you shall not be beheaded until to-morrow."

"I will sing for you," replied Ted, "but first I would ask you two questions."

The old man squatted upon the ground in anticipation of hearing Ted sing, and, as Ted made his request, the maniac's answer was merely a nod of his shaggy head.

"How long have you been an exile on this island?" was Ted's first question.

The answer was a startling one:

"Three thousand years!"

The answer was made in a matter-of-fact tone, as if there could be no mistake in the statement and no liability of dispute.

Ted offered no argument, either. He accepted the statement as if he fully believed it. Then he asked:

"Is there any particular song you wish to hear?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Well, what is it?"

The answer came promptly and decisively:

"Rock of Ages."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN INTERRUPTION.

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy wounded side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its wrath and power."

It was indeed a strange position in which Ted Strong found himself that morning.

Captured by an unknown, silent foe, bound and blindfolded, carried to a lonely cave high up in the face of a mountain, in a region unknown to him, he had suddenly found himself hopelessly secured by manacles on his feet. Then he had suddenly been visited by this strange maniac.

Ted was singing the grand old hymn to humor this lunatic.

At first Ted hardly realized the words he was chanting. He sang quite mechanically, but, as the old, familiar tune coursed through his mind and the words naturally came to his lips, he suddenly found himself almost as much interested in the song as was the maniac.

The effect of the music upon the crazy man was astonishing.

When the rich baritone voice of the young rough rider began the first verse of the old hymn, the sunken, saneless eyes had seemed to suddenly take on a new light—almost an expression of reason.

As Ted sang the old man's head nodded to and fro in time with the music. Then his head sank forward upon his breast, and the old man seemed to have gone to sleep.

But when Ted had finished the first verse and had paused naturally before starting the second, the maniac quickly raised his head as if annoyed.

His eyes were filled with an angry expression.

"Don't stop! Don't dare to stop! Go on! Go on with the song!"

"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.
In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling"

Ted was fully warmed up to the beauty of the song now, and he let his rich voice out, full and strong.

Far out into the valley rang the melodious air, and the music was taken up by the walls of the distant mountains and returned in echoes.

Ted did not pause for a moment when he came to the end of the second verse, but started the third as if it was a part of the verse just sung:

"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death,
When I rise to worlds unknown,
And behold Thee on Thy throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

During the singing of the last two verses the old man had sat in the entrance to the cave, his hoary head resting upon his knees and his body swaying backward and forward with the music.

As Ted finished the white-crowned head was raised, and Ted was surprised to see tears streaming from the old man's eyes.

There was a pleading expression on the old, wrinkled face, a look almost of supplication.

The music had had a strange effect upon the maniac.

In softer, but still rasping tones, the old man begged Ted to repeat the hymn. There was no demand now. It was a request.

Without answering, Ted immediately began singing again, and this time he sang the hymn through without a pause.

Carried away by the soothing effect of his own music, Ted had shut his eyes while singing the last verse.

Just at the close of the hymn, he heard a slight noise, and, looking up, he saw the old man standing and looking to the right, along the side of the mountain.

As Ted finished the last verse the old man turned, gave Ted a quick look, then, without a word, glided quickly away in the opposite direction from which he had been gazing.

Two minutes later there appeared a shadow across the mouth of the cave. Then, a second later, Ted was looking into the leering countenance of Jack Raub.

For a full minute the men stared into each other's eyes. Not a word was spoken by either.

A malicious, revengeful grin was spread over the face of Ted's silent enemy.

At last it was Ted who broke the silence:

"It was you, then, you brought me here?"

Raub merely nodded. The grin did not leave his face.

"You intend to kill me, I suppose?" asked Ted, in a matter-of-fact tone.

For the first time since his capture, Ted heard the man speak.

But even now Jack Raub uttered but three words, but they were words of terrible significance:

"Let you starve!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE RESCUE.

Bud Morgan and Ben Tremont had started off on the trail of Jack Raub at a fast gait when they left the hotel at Sunshine.

As has been stated, they were informed by Kit that Raub had taken a northward direction and had just passed from view into a growth of timber at the edge of the town.

Bud and Ben had no trouble in keeping the right trail, for there were no branching paths where it passed through the narrow belt of forest.

Sunshine was located upon a high elevation of rolling land, and as the two rough riders rode into the forest they found that they were gradually descending into a wide valley.

They soon rode through the belt of woods, and as they came to the open country again they found themselves looking down into this fertile valley.

From their position they could look for several miles in each direction, up and down the valley, and, over half a mile away, riding along at a moderate pace, they caught sight of the man they were following.

They thus knew which direction had been taken by Raub, and they lost no time in taking up the chase again.

It was a beautiful and picturesque country through which they were now traveling, and the weather, at that time of year, was delightful and invigorating.

It was neither too warm nor too cold, and, had it not been for the thought of what might have been the fate of the young rough rider, Bud and Ben would have enjoyed their trip immensely.

They took a fast gait, when they had reached the level of the valley, and they were soon in plain sight of Raub.

Raub did not travel fast, for his horse was already tired, and our two friends had little trouble in keeping him in sight most of the time.

But the rough riders took good care that the man who was being so closely followed did not get sight of them.

Thus was the chase continued until nearly noon, when Raub suddenly guided his horse off the straight trail and took an indistinct trail leading out of the valley to the left and through a narrow wooded gulch.

Through this gulch the rough riders followed, but their progress was slow, as they had to pick their way along carefully.

For a half or three-quarters of a mile their path led through the narrow gulch, and then they suddenly came out into another beautiful open valley or larger gulch.

As they came to a halt, for the purpose of ascertaining which direction had been taken by Raub, their ears suddenly caught the sounds of a strong, rich voice singing:

> "Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in Thee."

The two rough riders looked at each other in astonishment.

They had recognized the voice to be that of their young leader, Ted Strong.

As the sweet notes died away in echoes, Bud Morgan swallowed a lump which had seemed to rise in his throat, and muttered:

"He ain't dead! He ain't dead!"

The voice had seemingly come from the side of a high mountain on the opposite side of the big gulch.

The two rough riders lost no time in descending the trail into the gulch, and, as they finally halted on the bank of a little stream in the center of the valley, they gazed up at the opposite mountain.

A thrilling sight met their gaze.

High up the mountain, they could see the mouth of a cave, and in front of the entrance to the cave was standing Jack Raub.

The man was standing upon a ledge of rock that led up the mountain side from the north and continued on past the mouth of the cave for a considerable distance.

Raub's horse had been tied to a jutting rock about halfway up the mountain side.

But it was neither the man nor the horse that held the attention of the two rough riders.

To the left of Raub, further along the ledge, they beheld a strange creature, half crawling, half walking toward the man who was standing near the mouth of the cave.

This creature was no other than the crazy hermit, for whom Ted had been compelled to sing "The Rock of Ages."

As Ben and Bud watched the man creeping so slowly toward Raub they held their breath in suspense.

Suddenly they saw the maniac stand nearly erect and in his hand he held a large stick—the limb of a small tree.

Then the crazy man rushed forward toward Raub, and, with a great swing, he brought the stick down upon the shoulders of the tall man.

The blow shattered the limb and felled Raub to the ground.

Then the two rough riders urged their horses forward toward the foot of the ledge.

Raub had jumped up and started toward the old man, but just then he saw the two rough riders approaching, and, instead of attacking the hermit, he turned and rushed down the ledge to the foot of the mountain.

He was in such a hurry that he did not even stop to secure his horse, but, arriving at the foot of the ledge just ahead of the rough riders, he darted into a thick growth of timber and was soon out of sight.

The rough riders were now certain that Ted Strong was confined in the cave, and did not stop to pursue Raub.

They pushed on up the ledge, but when they came to where Raub's horse was tied they stopped long enough to secure the animal and lead it after them the remaining distance.

The hermit, seeing the two strange horsemen climbing the ledge, made a quick retreat.

Two minutes later Bud Morgan and Ben Tremont were standing in the entrance to the cave, gazing upon the face of Ted Strong.

It was a joyful meeting, and Bud Morgan bustled around like a happy child with a new toy.

An effort was made to loosen the padlocks which held the bands to Ted's feet, but neither Bud nor Ben could find a way to open them.

Ted was hungry, and it was decided to wait until he had had a lunch before making further attempts to release him.

While the young rough rider was eating some of the food brought by his friends from the hotel, Bud Morgan was looking through the saddlebags on the back of Raub's horse.

Suddenly he was heard to utter a joyful exclamation.

Then he came rushing into the cave, where Ben and Ted were talking over the events of his capture and the pursuit of Jack Raub.

In his hand Bud Morgan held a brass key.

On trial, it proved to be the key to the padlocks, and three minutes later the young rough rider was free.

CHAPTER X.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

"What in ther jumpin' snakes possessed yer ter sing?" asked Bud Morgan, a few minutes after Ted had been set free.

"I sang because it seemed necessary," replied Ted, and then the young rough rider told his friends about the strange visit of the old maniac.

"Was he the man who attacked Raub, just before we came up?" asked Ben.

"Yes," replied Ted, "and, by the way, did you notice which way the old man went?"

"No," replied Ben.

"Well, suppose we hunt for him. The old man is in a bad way and should be taken care of. He has been leading the life of a hermit in these hills, no one knows how long. He may have relatives somewhere who are mourning him as dead," remarked Ted.

The three rough riders then made a long and thorough search for the crazy hermit, but could find no trace of him or any clews as to where he had gone.

At last they gave up the search, for the time being, and decided to go down into the valley, where it would be more desirable to camp, there being water handy there and plenty of grass for the horses.

Ben and Bud informed Ted of the arrival of Arthur Maxim at the hotel in Sunshine and of Kit's plan to accompany the young mine owner to Satan's Gulch in search of the captain of the young rough riders.

Ted was sadly in need of food and rest, and it was now long past noon and time for all three to begin to think of getting a meal.

It was decided to go into camp at the foot of the mountain, in hopes of heading off Kit Summers and Maxim, who, it seemed quite probable, would follow about the same direction taken by Bud and Ben in their pursuit of Raub.

Accordingly a spot was selected for a camp and a fire was started in a sort of narrow gulch, or alcove, in the mountain—a sort of pocket opening directly into the valley.

While Ben Tremont built the fire and gathered dry wood and brought water, Bud Morgan took a short stroll down the valley and soon returned with a plump wild turkey. The birds were plentiful in the valley.

In a short time the fowl was being roasted over the fire.

Then the rough riders gathered around the fire. Ted sat with his back close to the precipitous side of the mountain wall.

Little dreaming of danger, Ted and his companions proceeded to eat their late dinner.

But, had any of the rough riders looked up toward the face of the mountain at that moment, they would have speedily changed their positions.

On the ledge above them, gazing down upon their camp, stood the ragged, hatless, wild-eyed maniac.

His face seemed distorted with rage.

Then the shaggy head disappeared for a moment, and when it again appeared, had the rough riders been looking above, they would have seen that the maniac had planned an awful catastrophe for them.

To the edge of the precipice, directly over Ted's head, the crazy hermit had rolled a huge rock.

He was now about to send it crashing down upon the heads of the three rough riders.

The first intimation that Ted or his companions had of danger was the sound of a sudden cracking of the rocks above them.

They glanced up quickly and saw that the huge rock was falling from the mountain ledge.

Then was heard a shrill, agonizing shriek.

The maniac had lost his balance, and was following the big stone to the foot of the mountain.

But the stone did not hit any of Ted's party, although their escape was little short of miraculous.

Afterward it was found that when the stone was on the very verge of the precipice a large layer of the rock composing the edge of the ledge had suddenly broken off.

This had tended to throw the big stone off in a slanting direction, so that, instead of it falling directly to the spot where the rough riders had been sitting, it had fallen several feet to the left of that spot.

But the breaking of the layer of rock had caused the maniac to lose his balance on the ledge, and he had started to fall to the ground below.

The falling body of the old hermit landed right across the shoulders of Ted Strong and Ben Tremont.

And, as the body hit the shoulders of the two young rough riders, Bud Morgan quickly caught it in his arms and lowered it gently to the ground.

Had the maniac fallen directly to the ground from the rocky ledge, he would most likely have been killed instantly.

As it was, the boys soon learned that he was alive, but unconscious. There was a wicked gash from his left temple diagonally clear across his scalp.

Ted made a quick examination, and then announced that if the man had not suffered concussion of the brain he would probably recover.

Under Ted's direction, everything possible was done to bring the maniac back to consciousness.

With boughs from the green trees a shelter was erected under which the injured man was placed upon a pile of horse blankets.

Ted and Ben continued to work over him until at last they had the satisfaction of seeing his eyelids quiver.

The man was returning to consciousness.

A moment later the eyes were opened, but were closed again instantly.

Then from the thin lips came a strange request.

"Please sing 'Rock of Ages'."

Ben had opened his mouth to say something, but Ted raised a warning finger.

Then the rich voice of the young rough rider was again raised in singing the beautiful old hymn.

As Ted sang a smile appeared upon the wasted face of the injured man and his lips opened and shut as if, to himself, he was repeating the words of the song with Ted.

Ted sang the song through and had commenced the first verse again, when the deep, regular breathing of his patient told him that the man was sleeping peacefully.

"The sleep will be good for him," said Ted, "and we will be careful not to disturb him. We will take turns watching over him."

"You need a rest yourself, Ted," remarked Ben, "and you had better take a nap while I watch the crazy man for a while."

"Thank you, Ben," was Ted's reply, "I'll act on your suggestion."

Ted had probably slept for an hour, when he was awakened by a voice coming from somewhere down the valley.

The voice was hailing the camp.

Ted raised up, just in time to see Bud Mor[illegible] ...ong the signs for the person who had called out to be silent.

Then Ted stood upon his feet and saw three riders approaching.

They were Kit Summers, Arthur Maxim and Brick Davis!

CHAPTER XI.

THE "SKY PILOT."

Kit, Maxim and Davis were overjoyed at finding Ted Strong alive and well, and they listened with great interest to the story of Ted's experiences.

Then they were informed of the fall received by the maniac in trying to kill Ted, Bud and B[illegible] rolling the heavy stone from the edge of the precipice.

While Ted was telling about the old man's request for him to sing the old hymn, "Rock of Ages," Arthur Maxim's face suddenly assumed a more than merely interested expression.

"You say he repeatedly wanted you to sing that same hymn?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Well, now this is strange," Maxim murmured, as if to himself.

At the arrival of Kit and Arty, Ben Tremont had left the temporary shelter, where the crazy man was still sleeping soundly, and had come out to greet the newcomers.

As the maniac seemed to be good for a long nap yet, it was not deemed necessary to stay right by his side constantly.

"No," replied Arty, "everything is just as it was. I have made no more attempts to work the mine. I concluded to wait until you arrived, after receiving your telegram that you would come."

"What is your own theory in regard to the ghost story?" asked Ted.

"I can hardly tell you what I think," said Maxim. "I have never believed in ghosts, but the sight I saw in the mine certainly seemed to be more than human. It was awful. I cannot shut my eyes now without seeing the terrible, grinning face. But still, I can hardly bring myself to believe it was a spirit I saw."

"Then you think some human agency is at work to prevent your claim being worked?" asked Ted.

"I will frankly tell you that I am entirely at sea concerning the matter. I don't know what to think. I can form no theory. That is what I hope you will be able to do."

"Well, we have decided to stay with you the rest of the summer, if necessary," was Ted's reply, "until this mystery is cleared up."

Had the men gathered around the fire but known it, they were not the only listeners to the conversation between Ted and the young mine owner.

Hidden in the growth of thick bushes, not far from the fire, was the crouching figure of a human being.

This hidden individual had been since dark watching the actions of the six men, and had listened to every word of the conversation.

The evil face of the listener had taken on a look of wicked hate, when Ted announced that he had come to help Maxim clear up the mystery of the mine, and, between the clinched teeth of the eavesdropper was hissed, in a low tone: "So ther young, smart Aleck thinks he kin find ther ghost of ther Lucky Strike? Well, I opine if he goes ter snoopin' inter things as don't consarn him, he'll get inter trouble."

"Has your claim ever been worked to speak of?" asked Ted, after Maxim had thanked him for the interest the young rough riders were taking in his affairs.

"The paying vein has hardly been touched," replied Maxim. "After the shaft was sunk, the original owner followed a vein in a diagonal direction to the extreme left. This passage leads quite a distance into the mine, but was evidently finally deserted, on account of the vein running out, or because the quartz did not show enough yellow. Afterward, when the claim passed into other hands, a new vein was opened in another direction from the shaft. This is the vein I hope to work, and it is a rich one."

"Have you ever thoroughly explored the abandoned passage?" asked the young rough rider.

"Perhaps not what you might call thoroughly," was Maxim's reply, "but I have been to the end of it several times. It ends in a solid wall of rock."

"How far is the mine from this place, and which direction must we travel from here to reach Satan's Gulch?" asked Kit Summers.

"Why, this is Satan's Gulch—this valley we are now in," was Arty's reply. "My mine is between twenty and twenty-five miles from here, up the valley. We follow that little stream right to my cabin."

"And where is the claim of this man, Raub, which you told me about?" was Kit's next question.

"Not far," was the answer, "not over two or three miles above here."

Thus the conversation kept up until quite a late hour.

It was decided to keep a guard over the camp during the night and the short watches were divided among the six men, Ted's watch not coming until toward morning.

One by one, the men, all but Davis, who was chosen for the first watch, rolled up in their blankets and went to sleep.

Ted was the last of the young rough riders, owing to his short nap during the afternoon, to become sleepy, and he sat and talked in low tones with Davis for over an hour.

Finally Davis began talking of Ted's great work in the trick revolver-shooting contest the previous day at Sunshine, and finally said:

"In yer pistol work yer never seem ter t[illegible] at all, but yer hit yer mark every time."

"Well," replied Ted, "it is a fact that I never aim along a pistol barrel with my eye, either in regular or trick shooting, but I take aim just the same."

"Yer do?" asked Brick, with a note of credulity in his voice. "And what der yer aim with, if it ain't yer eye?"

Ted's answer astonished Davis.

"I aim with my index finger."

"With yer index finger—ther finger next yer thumb?" repeated Brick. "What finger do yer use ter pull ther trigger?"

"My second finger, the next one to the index finger," replied Ted.

Brick looked confused. Ted smiled and then proceeded to make the matter clear to the man.

"Did you never know that a person will instinctively point straight at any object he wishes to with his index finger? It makes no difference whether the hand is on a level with the eye or down below the waist. The index finger never makes a mistake."

"That's news ter me," said Brick.

"Well, it's the truth, and it's a valuable fact to know, as I have learned, when you wish to be a good shot with the pistol."

"But how do yer handle ther gun?" asked Brick.

Ted took Davis' revolver to demonstrate, while he explained.

"I hold the revolver grip in the palm of my hand with my third and little fingers, thus. My index finger is stretched out straight along the barrel. That leaves my second finger free to pull the trigger. In shooting I do not think of the revolver at all. I merely point my index finger at the mark, sometimes, if necessary, making a slight allowance for the difference in the position of the end of the barrel, and where the end of my finger would be, did it reach the full length of the revolver barrel."

"Well, by——"

Davis had started to give utterance to some exclamation of astonishment, as Ted's theory of pistol shooting suddenly became clear to him, but his remark was interrupted.

There had come the crack of a rifle and a bullet had whizzed right between the heads of the two men, coming dangerously near to each!

Both men started to their feet, and, as they did so, they heard a crashing among the bushes to the right of the camp fire.

It sounded as if some one was beating a hurried retreat.

Davis, who was nearest to the bushes, his revolver in hand, jumped forward and Ted closely followed.

Then Ted heard Davis shout from several rods ahead in the darkness.

At the same moment there was the sound of another shot, followed by the thud of a falling body.

Ted hastened forward.

"Here I be; don't step on me!"

It was Davis' voice, and Ted found him lying near the roots of a small, upturned tree.

"Are you seriously hurt?" Ted asked, anxiously.

"Guess not, seriously," replied Davis. "Ther bullet took me in ther arm. I fell down because my foot caught in that there root."

Ted helped the man to his feet and to the fire, where an examination of the wounded arm showed that the bullet had broken no bones. The wound was by no means serious, and a bandage, applied at once, stopped the flow of blood.

"By guns," announced Brick, when his arm had been attended to, "I got a glimpse of ther critter's face all right. I were lookin' straight at him when he fired and the flash lit up his face."

"And did you recognize the prowler?" asked Ted.

"Yer bet I did," was the answer. "He were nobody else but thet enemy of yourn, Jack Raub!"

CHAPTER XIII.

RAUB'S TREACHEROUS SCHEME.

The shots from the revolver of Raub had awakened the sleepers, and, by the time Ted had led Davis to the fire, the whole camp was astir.

Ben Tremont and Bud Morgan started out to try and locate the night prowler, but they returned in half an hour without having found any traces of him.

"I tell yer, Ted, if I ever git my hands on that cuss, it'll be all off with him!" exclaimed Bud Morgan.

"I believe we ought to set about it and run him down," said Ben Tremont. "It isn't right to allow him to run wild. He's dangerous."

"If it wasn't for the importance of clearing up this mine mystery for Maxim, I would be in favor of hunting down Raub, myself," said Ted, "but the mine business seems to me to be more urgent and important."

"I don't blame you for wanting to clean up on Raub," put in Arty, "and I'll be glad to help you hunt for him. I guess the mine can wait a few days."

"Well, we'll see," was Ted's reply. "Perhaps we will have time to look Raub up, after we get through at the mine."

The awakened campers shortly composed themselves for another sleep, but it was little slumber that visited any of the party during the rest of the night.

There were no more disturbances, however, and all were up at daylight, getting ready for the ride to the mine.

"At any rate," announced Ben Tremont, "Jack Raub didn't secure his horse last night. The animal is still tied with the other five."

"That's certainly good news," Ted replied, "and as Raub brought me here against my will, I think I will just borrow his horse for a few days. The man must have another animal, however, for I was secured to one, while he rode another when he brought me from Sunshine."

After an early breakfast, the company started for the haunted mine, and, as they rode along, Maxim remarked:

"If there was only some way of cutting through this mountain range to the right, we could easily save twenty or twenty-one miles travel."

"How is that?" was asked.

"Because my mine is almost straight across on the other side of this mountain. I figure it is almost straight across the mountain from Raub's claim, and we will come in sight of his shanty when we round that ridge yonder."

Arty pointed to a ridge of rocks, that extended from the mountain side a short distance into the valley. The ridge was about one hundred yards ahead.

"But I thought you said that your mine was situated in Satan's Gulch?" asked Ted.

"Yes, so it is," was the reply, "but Satan's Gulch is very crooked. It extends southward, the direction we are going, for about ten miles, then turns to the west for a couple of miles, and, finally, makes a turn back northward. Thus we have to travel nearly twenty-five miles to go a distance, as the crow flies, of less than two. Could we go through the mountain we would only have to travel three-quarters of a mile or so, to reach Satan's Gulch on the other side."

"Hurrah, there's the shanty," announced Bud Morgan, at this point.

"Yes, that is Raub's claim," said Maxim. "What do you say, Ted, to stopping for a few minutes and taking a look around? You may be able to find your firearms and the gold medal which the man removed from your person."

"I should hate to lose my revolvers," replied Ted, "but it seems a small chance that Raub would leave them in his shanty."

"You can't tell. He might have figured it out that you would never think of looking for them here, and, for that reason, did so."

"Well, we'll take a look around, anyway," said the young rough rider.

The riders were now approaching the shanty, which was built close to the wall of the mountain. Close to the shanty, where the building backed up against the mountain wall, was a yawning hole leading into the mountain. This was evidently the entrance to Raub's mine.

The company under the leadership of Ted Strong had arrived within a few rods of the cabin, when the wooden shutter of the only window visible was suddenly opened and a man pushed his head and shoulders through the sash.

In his hands he held a long-barreled rifle.

The company instantly recognized the man as Jack Raub.

There was an evil look upon his face, which brooded no good for the riders who were approaching.

As Raub appeared in the window of the log cabin, Ted involuntarily stopped his horse and his followers did the same.

"Yer do well ter halt!" exclaimed Raub, "fer if yer hadn't I'd bored yer full of holes. This is my cabin and that there hole is my mine. Yer ain't got no right ter trespass onto my property, an' I'll give yer jest two minutes ter make yersel's scarce. If every last one of yer ain't gone then, I'm goin' ter begin shootin'."

When Raub had finished this long speech, Ted remarked:

"You have grown to be quite an orator, Mr. Raub, since I last saw you. If I remember correctly, you were not able to converse in English to any considerable extent yesterday. I am pleased to find that your voice has returned. But, all foolishness aside, I am really pleased to find that you are at home. You have a few things belonging to me, which I have called to get. I suppose you are now through with them and will be pleased to return them."

"Yer mean yer guns?" asked Raub, insolently.

"Yes, and a certain gold medal, which I won quite recently in a little shooting contest," was Ted's reply.

"So yer has come ter git 'em, eh?"

"Must I speak that little piece all over again?" asked Ted.

"Yer can sing it, if yer had rather sing than talk," was the reply, "but I'm here ter tell yer that yer is goin' ter be terribly disappointed. I aim ter keep those little trophies ter remember yer by."

"Then we will have to force you to give them up," said Ted.

"There ain't enough of you ter do it. If yer think there is, come on and try it!" challenged Jack.

"Make him eat them words, Ted!" exclaimed Bud Morgan.

"Come on and try it!" yelled Raub, tauntingly, hearing Bud's remark.

"Go slow, boys," cautioned Ted. "The man wants us to charge. He must know that under ordinary conditions we would certainly be able to do him up. He has some kind of a trap prepared."

"By the hokey-pokey, it's durn tough lines ter sit here an' let that sucker give us ther laugh!" said Bud. "If yer will give me ther word, capting, I'll make a break fer ther cabin erlone."

"We know you are game, all right," was Ted's reply, "but we want to find out how many trump cards Raub is holding, before we lay down our hands."

"Well, ye're ther boss," replied Bud.

"Ye're a lot of baby cowards!" yelled Raub. "Six men, an' ye're all afraid of me."

As he delivered this last sally, Raub drew in his head from the window, and, a moment later, appeared at the doorway.

From the door he stepped outside of the cabin. He still carried his rifle, and his revolvers were seen hanging from his belt, but none of the weapons were raised.

As he appeared, he shouted: "I want ter have a little talk with Ted Strong."

"Well, talk away," responded Kit Summers.

"Shet up yer head, you," snarled Raub. "This little difference is between yer boss an' myself. It ain't yer put in. I want ter talk with him an' I want ter see him alone."

"Don't yer listen ter ther villain," said Bud.

"Wait for a minute, Bud, until I can find out what he wants," admonished Ted. Then, turning to Raub, he shouted: "What have you got to propose?"

"Well, p'r'aps I've made a durn fool of myself," was the man's reply, "an' I don't mind givin' yer back yer weapons an' ther medal. They ain't no perticular use ter me. But I want ter do ther business with yer alone. This ain't none of those other fellers' business, anyway."

"Well, lay your weapons to one side and I'll ride up and talk to you," said Ted, with a sudden determination.

Ted's friends objected to his yielding to the villain's request, but Ted had determined to get close to Raub and find out what was really in the wind. Not for a moment did Ted believe that the young man, who had sworn to kill him, had any intention of giving up the guns or medal.

At Ted's words, Raub advanced and laid his rifle down in the mouth of the mine. Then he unbuckled his belt, containing two revolvers and a knife, and laid it by the rifle. He then returned to the front of his cabin, near the door.

Ted rode up to the front of the cabin and dismounted.

"Now I'm ready ter make a bargain with yer," was Raub's greeting. "If yer will give up my horse that yer are riding, I'll give yer ther barkers an' ther medal."

"I'll agree to that," replied Ted. He thought to himself that perhaps Raub really valued the horse and was sincere in the bargain proposed.

"Ther guns is in ther house," said Raub, "an' yer can go in an' get 'em. I've got ther medal in my pocket and I'll hand that over when yer give up ther horse."

Ted glanced into the cabin through the open doorway.

Jack was not lying about the guns. Ted could see them upon a rough table, at the further side of the one room of the cabin.

The young rough rider knew that his friends had Raub covered with their weapons. It seemed that it would be impossible for the man to harm him treacherously.

Ted wanted his revolvers badly. The weapons had been made especially for himself, and they were valuable. The hand grips had been molded to fit his hand perfectly and there were several improvements in the weapons, invented by Ted himself.

He resolved to take Raub at his word, enter the cabin and get the weapons.

But Ted did not see the gratified expression in Raub's eyes, when he started to dismount.

Ted did not think it necessary to instruct his friends to keep an eye on Raub. He did not even glance toward his companions. He had implicit faith in Bud and Ben and Kit.

Raub was playing a deep game, could Ted have but known it, and the minute that the young rough rider crossed the threshold of the cabin door and started toward the table, the chances were many to one that he would never leave that cabin again alive.

In an old newspaper, Raub had previously wrapped up a few sticks of dynamite.

He had placed the package upon the floor of the cabin, not far from the rough table upon which he had laid Ted's revolvers.

Raub had placed his rifle, two revolvers and knife on the ground, just within the entrance to the mine, but concealed in the front of his loose blouse Raub had a third revolver.

There was a revengeful glitter in his eyes as he watched the young rough rider enter the cabin.

Raub had stationed himself so that, without moving, he had a clear view of the interior of the cabin and the package of dynamite.

Just as Ted reached the table, Raub quickly pulled his revolver from the front of his blouse and fired a quick shot, directly at the package of dynamite!

As he did so he turned and ran toward the mouth of his mine.

Three shots followed the man from the weapons of Bud Morgan, Kit Summers and Ben Tremont, but all seemed to have gone wild.

At the same instant the dynamite exploded!

The roof was blown off from the cabin and the logs, composing its sides, were sent flying in every direction!

As the noise of the explosion died away, Bud Morgan's voice was raised in an exclamation of anguish:

"Good Lord, boys, ther villain has killed our capting!"

CHAPTER XIV.

KIT'S DISCOVERY.

"Don't let the murderer escape!" shouted Ben Tremont.

Raub had disappeared into the mine shaft, after he had fired his shot into the package of dynamite.

Not one of those who had witnessed the tragedy believed that the young rough rider had not been killed instantly by the terrific explosion, and, led by Ben Tremont, they quickly started in pursuit of the man whose treacherous scheme, they believed, had caused the death of Ted Strong.

At the entrance to the mine they quickly dismounted and entered the mine on foot—all but Brick Davis. He remained outside in charge of the horses.

Ben noticed that Raub had snatched up his revolvers and rifle as he had entered the mine.

Down the gently sloping shaft Ben and his companions ran, and, arriving at the level, it was found the shaft reached a passage leading both to the right and left.

Hurriedly Ben gave several words of direction and the party divided, Ben going to the left, accompanied by Maxim, while Bud went to the right, accompanied by Kit.

Fifteen minutes later all four met again at the bottom of the shaft.

Both ends of the passage had been explored and no sign of the villain had been found.

The passasge in each direction was nearly straight. There were no apparent branching passages and each end of the passage ended in a dead wall of rock.

Yet, somewhere in that mine, Raub had found a hiding place!

"There must be some secret passage leading from this one, somewhere," announced Ben Tremont, finally, "and I'm going to stick right here until I find it."

"I'm with you," said Kit.

"Well, then, you fellers hunt fer the secret passage," said Bud, "and I'll go up and try ter find ther body of ther young capting."

Bud's voice trembled as he spoke and there were tears in his eyes.

He fully believed Ted to be dead.

While Ben and Kit continued their exploration of the mine, Bud and Maxim went to the surface to search the ruins of the cabin for the body of the young rough rider.

With the assistance of Brick Davis, the heavy logs were rolled to one side.

After half an hour's work the three men discovered that the dynamite had blown a big hole right in the floor of what was once the log cabin.

The hole was as large as a good-sized cellar, but was so dark below that its depth could not be determined.

Bud went to his saddlebags and soon re[illegible] with a candle and his lariat.

He secured one end of the lariat about his waist and then requested his companions to lower him into the hole.

Hand over hand Bud was let down into the darkness of the pit.

At last they heard him announce that he was at the bottom.

"It seems to me that is a pretty big hole for a small amount of dynamite to blow into the ground," said Davis.

"That is just what I was thinking," replied Maxim.

For several minutes the two men stood over the hole waiting to hear from Bud. At last they heard the rough rider shout to them.

There was a ring of joy in Bud's voice.

"I've found Ted!" he said.

"You don't mean that he is alive?" asked Maxim.

"Yes, he's alive," replied Bud Morgan, "but he's unconscious an' I can't tell how much he's hurted."

But it was a great relief to learn that the young rough rider was alive.

Bud was busy for several moments and then he gave the friends above directions to pull up the rope very carefully.

Two minutes later, loving hands were stretched out toward the inanimate body of the young rough rider, and Ted was carried from the ruins and laid tenderly upon a grassy knoll, some distance away.

Then Bud Morgan was hastily brought to the surface.

Bud's first words were: "Get Ben Tremont, quick, somebody! He knows more'n we does about what ter do fer Ted."

Maxim started at once toward the mine, but met both Bud and Kit in the shaft.

Ben was soon bending over the form of Ted. In a minute he announced that the young rough rider was breathing very feebly.

Then he began giving quick directions, and soon had every member of the party doing something for Ted's relief.

Ben found that Ted's left arm, at the shoulder, had become dislocated, and, before attempting to bring his friend to consciousness, he resolutely took hold of the injured member just above the elbow and, with a quick jerk, sprung the joint back into place.

Ted's face was dirty and bloody, but when washed, the latter was found to have come from a number of insignificant scratches on the cheeks and neck.

Then, for an hour, Ben worked over the young leader of the rough riders before he finally was rewarded by seeing Ted open his eyes.

Half an hour later, the young rough rider sat up and began to comprehend how miraculous his escape had been.

After he had fully recovered from the shock, Ted announced that he was going to search the ruins for his revolvers.

"I think yer weapons is at ther bottom of ther hole, where I found you," announced Bud, "fer I seen a part of yer belt down there, part covered by ther dirt."

"Don't move, Ted," said Kit, "for you arm must be pretty sore. I'll go down and get the guns, if some of you fellows will lower me."

Kit was soon at the bottom of the hole and found the belt with the weapons intact, without trouble.

He was about to give his friends above an order to haul him up when, in turning around, he noticed that the hole he was in seemed to bulge out considerably on the side toward the mountain.

He stepped over to that side and found that the hole extended some distance.

"Throw me down a candle!" he shouted to those above.

In a short time Kit had a light, and, as he held it above his head, he discovered that, where he had thought the hole bulged out, there was in reality a regular underground cave, and that it extended as far toward the mountain as the feeble rays of the candle pierced the darkness.

CHAPTER XV.

RAUB IS CAPTURED.

When Kit realized the fact that he had made a discovery which might prove of great importance, he did not stop to explore the passage, but at once gave his friends a signal to draw him up.

Arrived at the top of the hole again, Kit lost no time in telling his companions of what he had discovered.

"If I am not mistaken," he said, "the passage leads quite a distance into the mountain, and I think it would be wise to explore it. It is possible this passage is in some way connected with one of the passages in Raub's mine, and if so, we may be able to capture the man."

Ted agreed with Kit, and, although his arm still pained him considerably, the young rough rider insisted upon being lowered into the hole to personally conduct the exploration.

Ted was accompanied by Kit, Bud and Ben, while Maxim and Davis remained at the mouth of the mine, to head off Raub should he return that way and to look after the horses.

The rough riders supplied themselves well with matches and candles before starting on their exploring trip along the passage, which had so strangely been uncovered by the explosion.

The passsage was of uniform wideness and height, and was large for comfortable traveling.

The difference in the material of which the walls and roof were composed told Ted when he had come to where the passage entered the mountain, and a little beyond this point the passage through which he was leading his companions made almost a square turn to the left.

For a considerable distance the rough riders followed the tunnel when Ted stopped and began sounding the wall to the right.

A resounding echo was the result.

"Boys," declared Ted, "there is another cavity in the mountain, beyond this wall."

"Then we are traveling parallel with the passage leading to the left in Raub's mine," said Tremont, and then the big rough rider explained to Ted what himself and Kit had found while exploring the mine.

"Then I am certain that, somewhere along this wall, there is a secret door or opening, leading from one passage into the other. That would account for your not finding Raub in the mine," said Ted.

As they moved slowly along, the rough riders examined every foot of the wall, until, suddenly, they were startled by a loud scream, which seemed to come from the passage they were then in, but further ahead than they could see.

The scream was repeated twice, and, before it had sounded the third time, Ted was running forward at full speed.

He was closely followed by his companions.

Several rods they had run when Ted saw a light in the passage, some yards ahead.

The light seemed to come from a cross passage or room, to one side of the passage the young rough riders were in.

In a minute Ted was at the spot where he had seen the light, and, looking down an avenue branching to the right, he was just in time to see Raub turning a corner.

On after the man dashed Ted, and, as his companions came up, one by one, they followed.

Dashing around the corner where Raub had vanished, Ted suddenly found himself in an underground room, probably ten feet square.

In the room he discovered Raub bending over the body of some human being, who was lying motionless upon the floor.

Raub had not heard the approach of the young rough rider. He seemed very much absorbed in his occupation of going through the pockets of the dead or unconscious man.

With a bound Ted reached Raub and the young rough rider's arms encircled the waist of the man who had several times tried to kill him.

Ted had forgotten for the moment that one arm had been injured, but, as he exerted his strength to hold down the arms of Raub, the fact was suddenly recalled to him. A pain shot through the wounded member.

Raub struggled and the pain in Ted's arm was intense, but the young rough rider gritted his teeth and hung on, until Ben Tremont and Bud Morgan arrived.

Then it took but a second to subdue the man and bind him securely.

Ted turned his attention to the unconscious form on the floor, and, as he stooped to examine the body, a cry of surprise passed his lips:

"The crazy hermit!"

It was indeed the maniac who had visited Ted when the young rough rider had been chained in the mountain cave.

As Ted gave voice to the exclamation, Bud Morgan rushed forward, and, kneeling beside the body, held up the hermit's left hand.

"There, Ted, see! Didn't I tell yer I seen ther scar?"

Bud had been right. Upon the left thumb of the crazy man was a small, red scar, shaped like the letter Z.

There seemed to be no question but that he was really the crazy man referred to in the advertisement in the Portland paper.

But was the hermit dead or only unconscious?

Ted stepped forward to make an examination. The young rough rider found the lump upon the man's head, where he had been injured the day before by the [illegible] from the brink of the precipice, and, after a little further search, Ted found where the scalp had been bruised more recently.

"The man is not dead," finally said Ted, "but he has had a severe scalp wound and is in a bad way. He should be taken to where an expert surgeon can handle the case as quickly as possible."

Then, turning suddenly upon Raub, Ted remarked, sternly: "You know all about this case. You hit that man over the head with the butt of your revolver. It is very likely you will suffer for the crime of murder rather than the charge I should have preferred against you."

"Lordy me," said Bud Morgan, "if I had my say I'd swing thet cuss ter ther nearest tree without no delay!"

The face of Raub grew ashen pale, as he heard Bud's remark. He was not well acquainted with Ted Strong's methods and he did not know but that the young rough rider would carry out Bud's suggestion.

"Don't, don't hang me!" he pleaded.

A sudden idea came to Ted. Of course he had no intention of letting Raub be lynched, but he thought a little scare would not hurt the man, who had so persistently tried to bring about his death.

"What will you promise if I'll agree not to lynch you?" asked Ted, suddenly.

Raub now showed his real, cowardly nature. He was thoroughly scared and completely cowed.

In cringing tones he answered: "If you will promise not to let 'em lynch me, an' will see that I get a regular trial, I'll confess everything I know about ther old hermit and ther ghost of ther Lucky Strike!"

"The ghost of the Lucky Strike?" repeated Ted, taken quickly by surprise.

Is it possible that, in the capture of Raub, two birds had been killed by one stone, as the saying goes?

Perhaps, at any rate, what Raub would have to tell would help to straighten out the mystery. Ted thought a moment, as if turning the proposition over in his mind.

Then, when he thought that Raub had been duly impressed, he replied:

"I will promise that you shall have a regular, fair trial, on whatever charge may be brought against you, providing that you tell all you know about the hermit and the mystery of Maxim's mine, known as the Lucky Strike."

Raub started to begin his confession at once, but Ted stopped him.

"Wait," said Ted, "until we have reached the surface, with the body of the crazy hermit."

CHAPTER XVI.

RAUB'S STORY.

"I have not been over the road, that is, to see it. How is the trail between here and Sunshine? Could a wagon go over it all right?"

Ted had asked the question after the unconscious hermit had been brought to the surface and laid tenderly upon a pile of blankets.

Ted's experienced eye had seen that, without proper drugs, he could not bring the man to a state of consciousness without danger of an after relapse, which might prove fatal.

Brick Davis was the first to answer the question. He said he thought a wagon could easily travel the trail, and the others agreed with him.

"Will you start right out and ride to Sunshine, get a doctor and bring him here and a wagon and team to convey this injured man back to Sunshine?" asked Ted.

"Sure," was Davis' ready reply, and he at once mounted his horse.

"I know ther trail like a book," he shouted, as he prepared to gallop away, "an' yer can look fer me back before ter-morrow mornin'."

"Good," returned Ted, and then added: "You had better bring a mattress or feather bed along in the wagon."

Davis waved his hand to show that he had heard, and soon disappeared up the valley.

When he was sure that nothing more could be done immediately for the unconscious maniac, Ted turned his attention to his prisoner.

"Now," said the young rough rider, "we will listen to your confession."

It took Raub a long time to tell all that Ted wanted to know. He had to be prompted many times by questions, but when he was through Ted knew that the mystery of the Lucky Strike Mine was solved and that Arthur Maxim would be disturbed no more by "ghosts."

In brief, Raub's story was as follows:

Three years before this time he had begun working his claim, at the spot where the company was at that time.

He had struck pay dirt at the start and thought he was going to make a fortune, but suddenly the vein he was following ran out. His passage had run into a natural cave in the mountain.

Eventually, Raub had learned that this natural cave ran clear through the mountain, and, at the other side, ran, for a considerable distance, parallel with the deserted passage of the mine now owned by Maxim.

The new passage of the Lucky Strike Mine, Raub knew, would ultimately strike the same cave. There was rich ore between the cave and the new passage and Raub wanted to mine it himself.

He conceived the idea of making a secret entrance to the Lucky Strike Mine, and did so, through the narrow partition between the cave and the deserted passsage. The mechanism of this secret passage was cunningly conceived.

Then he walled up the passage leading from his claim into the cave and there, also, contrived a cunningly concealed door.

It was through this door that he had escaped when pursued by Ted's friends after the explosion.

Then it was that Raub began playing the ghost.

He told Ted where, in a portion of the cave not yet explored by them, there could be found the powder used for the colored fire, the white costumes, the skeleton arms and other paraphernalia used by him while playing the ghost.

Then Raub told how he had made a trip to Seattle and had there been taken sick and confined in a hospital for several months.

Finally returning to the mountain, he found his cabin occupied by the crazy hermit. He had driven the man out several times, but the maniac had persistently returned.

Finding that the hermit had discovered the secret doors leading from his mine into the cave, and from the cave into the Lucky Strike Mine, Raub had finally made the hermit understand that he could live in the cave if he would play ghost and frighten any men who attempted to work the Lucky Strike Mine.

Thereafter Raub had left his claim for weeks at a time, fully trusting the hermit to do his part.

The crazy man had acted the part of ghost even better than Raub, and the two seldom saw each other.

But Raub knew that the maniac hated him and would kill him at any moment if he got the chance, so he never slept in his cabin without making the door and window secure against intrusion.

When Raub had told all that would evidently be of use to the listeners, Ted asked:

"Why did you strike the man in the cave to-day?"

"I was angry with him," was the reply. "When he saw me he screamed. I knew that you had entered the cave through the hole in the floor of the cabin. I was afraid you would hear his scream and come that way."

* * * * * * *

The readers of this story will be interested in knowing that the wagon and team, which Brick Davis had gone after, arrived just before daylight the next morning, and that the doctor who arrived with Davis succeeded in pulling the old man back to life.

But for over a week, a relapse threatened to set in, and the old man required constant watching.

During his sickness he was fully identified as the Rev. W. I. N. Jones. His relatives arrived from Portland, and they were overjoyed when he finally recovered, for then it was found that his reason had been completely restored.

He had become insane in the first place on account of a fall which drove a small piece of the skull against the brain. The blow received by Raub's revolver butt released this pressure and restored to him his reason.

Before Raub was put in jail, to await his trial on whatever charge might be preferred against him, he restored to the young rough rider the gold medal won at the shooting contest.

When Ted and his companions were offered the five thousand dollars reward for the restoration of the Rev. Jones to his friends, the boys held a short consultation, after which Ted asked the lawyer who had been sent on with the money:

"Who is putting up this reward?"

"The members of the church of which the Re[illegible]nes was pastor just before he became insane," was the answer.

"Is it a rich church?"

"No; most of the members belong to the poorer class."

"Such being the case we have decided that four thousand dollars be given to that church to be used as the trustees may deem proper. The other thousand we will donate to the Rev. Jones, for the purpose of settling his medicinal and doctor bills," announced Ted.

Arthur Maxim was greatly pleased that the mystery of his mine was cleared up.

He started work at the mine again as soon as possible, and the Lucky Strike turned out much as he had predicted, one of the best-paying mines of the West.

Brick Davis is now Maxim's most trusted overseer.

THE END.

Ted Strong and his companions did not leave the Northwest immediately after the mystery of Maxim's mine was cleared up. They stayed in the vicinity for hunting purposes and soon became involved in a series of startling adventures. The story next week, which is No. 58, entitled "The Young Rough Rider's River Route; or, A Fight Against Great Odds," tells of these adventures interestingly, of an exciting fight with timber thieves, a ride along an underground river, and of finding a treasure in an underground lake.

YOUNG ROUGH RIDERS WEEKLY

7—Ted Strong in Montana; or, Trouble at the Blackfoot Agency.
8—Ted Strong's Nerve; or, Wild West Sport at Black Mountain.
9—Ted Strong's Rival; or, The Cowboys of Sunset Ranch.
10—Ted Strong's Peril; or, Saved by a Girl.
11—Ted Strong's Gold Mine; or, The Duel at Rocky Ford.
12—Ted Strong's Lawsuit; or, Right Against Might.
13—Ted Strong's Railway Trip; or, An Unsolved Mystery.
14—Ted Strong's Mission; or, Taming a Tenderfoot.
15—Ted Strong's Might; or, The Cross Against the Sword.
16—Ted Strong's Puzzle; or, The Golden Mesa.
17—Ted Strong in the Chaparral; or, The Hunt at Las Animas.
18—Ted Strong's Forethought; or, King of the Mesa.
19—Ted Strong in the Land of Little Rain; or, Bud Morgan's Vengeance.
20—Ted Strong's Water Sign; or, In Shoshone Land.
21—Ted Strong's Steadiness; or, The Cattle Rustlers of Ceriso.
22—Ted Strong's Land Boom; or, The Rush for a Homestead.
23—Ted Strong's Indian Trap; or, Matching Craft with Craft.
24—Ted Strong's Signal; or, Racing with Death.
25—Ted Strong's Stamp Mill; or, The Woman in Black.
26—Ted Strong's Recruit; or, A Hidden Foe.
27—Ted Strong's Discovery; or, The Rival Miners.
28—Ted Strong's Chase; or, The Young Rough Riders on the Trail.
29—Ted Strong's Enemy; or, An Uninvited Guest.
30—Ted Strong's Triumph; or, The End of the Contest.
31—Ted Strong in Nebraska; or, The Trail to Fremont.
32—Ted Strong in Kansas City; or, The Last of the Herd.
33—The Rough Riders in Missouri; or, In the Hands of His Enemy.
34—The Young Rough Riders in St. Louis; or, The League of the Camorra.
35—The Young Rough Riders in Indiana; or, The Vengeance of the Camorra.
36—The Young Rough Riders in Chicago; or, Bud Morgan's Day Off.
37—The Young Rough Riders in Kansas; or, The Trail of the Outlaw.
38—The Young Rough Riders in the Rockies; or, Fighting in Mid Air.
39—The Young Rough Rider's Foray; or, The Mad Horse of Raven Hill.
40—The Young Rough Rider's Fight to the Death; or, The Mad Hermit of Bear's Hole.
41—The Young Rough Rider's Indian Trail; or, Okanaga, the Cheyenne.
42—The Young Rough Rider's Double; or, Unmasking a Sham.
43—The Young Rough Rider's Vendetta; or, The House of the Sorceress.
44—Ted Strong in Old Mexico; or, The Haunted Hacienda.
45—The Young Rough Rider in California; or, The Owls of San Pablo.
46—The Young Rough Rider's Silver Mine; or, The Texas Giant.
47—The Young Rough Rider's Wildest Ride; or, Cleaning Out a Whole Town.
48—The Young Rough Rider's Girl Guide; or, The Maid of the Mountains.
49—The Young Rough Rider's Handicap; or, Fighting the Mormon Kidnapers.
50—The Young Rough Rider's Daring Climb; or, The Treasure of Copper Crag.
51—The Young Rough Rider's Bitterest Foe; or, The Challenge of Capt. Nemo.
52—The Young Rough Rider's Great Play; or, The Mad Ally of a Villain.
53—The Young Rough Rider Trapped; or, A Villain's Desperate Play.
54—The Young Rough Rider's Still-Hunt; or, The Mystery of Dead Man's Pass.
55—The Young Rough Rider's Close Call; or, The Girl from Denver.
56—The Young Rough Rider's Long Ride; or, Life Against Life.

All of the above numbers always on hand. If you cannot get them from your newsdealer, five cents per copy will bring them to you by mail, postpaid.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK

NICK CARTER WEEKLY

THE BEST DETECTIVE STORIES IN THE WORLD

389—Mercedes Danton's Double; or, A Plot for Many Millions.
390—The Millionaire's Nemesis; or, Paul Roger's Oath of Vengeance.
391—A Princess of the Underworld; or, The Mysterious Burglary at Lakeview.
392—A Queen of Her Kind; or, A Beautiful Woman's Nerve.
393—Isabel Benton's Trump Card; or, Desperate Play to Win.
394—A Princess of Hades; or, The Reappearance of Dazaar, the Fiend.
395—A Compact with Dazaar; or, The Devil Worshiper's Den.
396—In the Shadow of Dazaar; or, At the Mercy of Vampires.
397—The Crime of a Money-King; or, The Battle of the Magnates.
398—The Terrible Game of Millions; or, Tracking Down the Plotters.
399—A Dead Man's Power; or, The Mystery of a Telephone Number.
400—The Secrets of an Old House; or, The Crime of Washington Heights.
401—The House with the Open Door; or, The Double Crime of Madison Avenue.
402—The Society of Assassination; or, The Detective's Double Disguise.
403—The Brotherhood of the Crossed Swords; or, The Little Giant's Mighty Task.
404—The Trail of the Vampire; or, The Mysterious Crimes of Prospect Park.
405—The Demons of the Night; or, The Terrors of the Idol's Cavern.
406—The Captain of the Vampire; or, Smugglers of the Deep Sea.
407—A Bank President's Plot; or, Three Villains of a Stripe.
408—The Master Criminal; or, With the Devil in His Eye.
409—The Carruthers Puzzle; or, Nick Carter's Best Disguise.
410—Inez, the Mysterious; or, The Master Criminal's Mascot.
411—The Criminal Queen's Oath; or, The Difference Between Two.
412—The Point of a Dagger; or, The Criminal Queen's Madness.
413—Doctor Quartz, the Second; or, The Great Freight Car Mystery.
414—Doctor Quartz, the Second, at Bay; or, A Man of Iron Nerve.
415—The Great Hotel Murders; or, Doctor Quartz's Quick Move.
416—Zanoni, the Woman Wizard; or, The Ward of Doctor Quartz.
417—The Woman Wizard's Hate; or, A Dangerous Foe.
418—The Prison Demon; or, The Ghost of Dr. Quartz.
419—Nick Carter and the Hangman's Noose; or, Dr. Quartz on Earth Again.
420—Dr. Quartz's Last Play; or, A Hand with Royal Flush.
421—Zanoni, the Transfigured; or, Nick Carter's Phantom Mascot.
422—By Command of the Czar; or, Nick Carter's Boldest Defiance.
423—The Conspiracy of an Empire; or, Nick Carter's Bravest Act.
424—A Queen of Vengeance; or, Nick Carter's Beautiful Nemesis.
425—Daring Dan, the Human Mystery; or, Nick Carter's Smoothest Foe.
426—Dan Derrington's Double; or, Nick Carter's Terrible Test.
427—The Great Gold Swindle; or, The Little Giant's Masterpiece.
428—An East River Mystery; or, Nick Carter's Daring Leap.
429—The Phantom Highwayman; or, Nick Carter's Slender Clew.
430—A Million Dollar Hold Up; or, Nick Carter's Richest Client.
431—Nick Carter and the Man With the Crooked Mind.
432—Nick Carter's Convict Enemy; or, The Power that Makes Men Tremble.
433—The Pirate of the Sound; or, Nick Carter's Midnight Swim.
434—The Cruise of the Shadow; or, Nick Carter's Ocean Chase.

All of the above numbers always on hand. If you cannot get them from your newsdealer, five cents per copy will bring them to you by mail, postpaid.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

Containing the Most Thrilling Adventures of the Celebrated Government Scout "BUFFALO BILL" (Hon. William F. Cody)

164—Buffalo Bill's Wildest Ride; or, The Monster Serpent of the Bad Lands' Lake.
165—Buffalo Bill and the Greengoods' Cabal; or, The Woman with the Manacled Arm.
166—Buffalo Bill's Lightning Shot; or, The Red Gulch Rescue.
167—Buffalo Bill's Bandit Friend; or, The Mystery of the Black Riders.
168—Buffalo Bill at Bay; or, The Claim Jumper of Silver Gulch.
169—Buffalo Bill's Dark Drive; or, Manton, the Mountain Mystery.
170—Buffalo Bill's Fair, Square Deal; or, The Duke of the Dagger's Dead Lock.
171—Buffalo Bill's Bold Brigade; or, Injun Joe's Burrow.
172—Buffalo Bill on a Hunt for Gold; or, The Lost Mine of the Cimarrons.
173—Buffalo Bill's Ride for Life; or, Fighting the Border Cattle Thieves.
174—Buffalo Bill's Double; or, The Mephisto of the Prairie.
175—Buffalo Bill and the Claim Jumpers; or, The Mystery of Hellgate Mine.
176—Buffalo Bill's Strategy; or, The Queen of the Crater Cave.
177—Buffalo Bill in Morenci; or, The Cat of the Copper Crag.
178—Buffalo Bill's Dead Drop; or, The Ghost-Scout of Colorado.
179—Buffalo Bill's Texan Hazard; or, The War Trail of the Apaches.
180—Buffalo Bill's Blindfold Duel; or, The Death Feud in Arizona.
181—Buffalo Bill's Mexican Feud; or, The Bandits of Sonora.
182—Buffalo Bill's Still Hunt; or, The Masked Men of Santa Fé.
183—Buffalo Bill's Fiercest Fight; or, The Captive of the Apaches.
184—Buffalo Bill's Navajo Ally; or, The War with the Cave Dwellers.
185—Buffalo Bill's Best Shot; or, Saving Uncle Sam's Troopers.
186—Buffalo Bill's Girl Pard; or, The Mystery of the Blindfold Club.
187—Buffalo Bill's Eagle Eye; or, The Battle of the Staked Plains.
188—Buffalo Bill's Arizona Alliance; or, Navajos Against Apaches.
189—Buffalo Bill's Mexican Adventure; or, The White Indians of Yucatan.
190—Buffalo Bill After the Bandits; or, Chasing the Wyoming Bank Robbers.
191—Buffalo Bill's Red Trailer; or, The Hole-in-the-Wall Outlaws of Wyoming.
192—Buffalo Bill in the Hole-in-the-Wall; or, Fighting the Wyoming Bank Robbers.
193—Buffalo Bill and the Bandit in Armor; or, The Mysterious Horseman of the Mountains.
194—Buffalo Bill and the Masked Mystery; or, The Wild Riders of the Wilderness.
195—Buffalo Bill in the Valley of Death; or, The Masked Brotherhood.
196—Buffalo Bill in the Land of Fire; or, Nick Nomad, the Mountain Wanderer.
197—Buffalo Bill in the Den of Snakes; or, The Search for a Ton of Gold.
198—Buffalo Bill's Nebraskan Quest; or, The Secret Brotherhood of the Platte.
199—Buffalo Bill and the Hounds of the Hills; or, The Traitor Trooper.
200—Buffalo Bill's Young Partner; or, The Outlaw Queen's Cipher Message.
201—Buffalo Bill's Great Search; or, Bagging Bad Birds in Wyoming.
202—Buffalo Bill and the Boy in Blue; or, The Ghost Dancers of the Bad Lands.
203—Buffalo Bill's Long Chase; or, Nervy Frank's Leap for Life.
204—Buffalo Bill's Mine Mystery; or, Conquering the Brotherhood of the Crimson Cross.
205—Buffalo Bill's Strategic Tactics; or, Trailing the Terrible Thirty-nine.
206—Buffalo Bill's Big Jack Pot; or, A Game for a Life.
207—Buffalo Bill's Last Bullet; or, Solving the Mystery of Robber's Rock.

All of the above numbers always on hand. If you cannot get them from your newsdealer, five cents per copy will bring them to you by mail, postpaid.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK

BRAVE AND BOLD

Contains the Biggest and Best Stories of All Descriptions.
A Different Complete Story Each Week.

FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF THE LATEST ISSUES:

73—Seared With Iron; or, The Band of Skeleton Bar. By Cornelius Shea.
74—The Deuce and the King of Diamonds; or, Two Southern Boys in South Africa. By the author of "Among the Malays."
75—Now or Never; or, The Adventures of Bobby Bright. By Oliver Optic.
76—Blue-Blooded Ben; or, Two Princeton Pals. By the author of "Hal Larkin."
77—Checkered Trails; or, Under the Palmettoes. By Marline Manley.
78—Figures and Faith; or, Messenger Clinton's Chance. By the author of "The Hero of Ticonderoga."
79—The Trevalyn Bank Puzzle; or, The Face in the Locket. By Matt Royal.
80—The Athlete of Rossville; or, The Isle of Serpents. By Cornelius Shea.
81—Try Again; or, The Trials and Triumphs of Harry West. By Oliver Optic.
82—The Mysteries of Asia; or, Among the Komdafs. By Cornelius Shea.
83—The Frozen Head; or, Puzzling the Police. By Paul Rand.
84—Dick Danforth's Death Charm; or, Lost in the South Seas. By the author of "The Wreck of the *Glaucus*."
85—Burt Allen's Trial; or, Why the Safe was Robbed. By W. A. Parcelle.
86—Prisoners of War; or, Jack Dashaway's Rise from the Ranks. By "Old Tecumseh."
87—A Charmed Life; or, The Boy with the Snake Skin Belt. By the author of "Among the Malays."
88—Only an Irish Boy; or, Andy Burke's Fortunes. By Horatio Alger, Jr.
89—The Key to the Cipher; or, The Boy Actor's Struggle. By Frank J. Earll.
90—Through Thick and Thin; or, Foes to the Last. By Walter J. Newton.
91—In Russia's Power; or, How Two Boys Outwitted the Czar. By Matt Royal.
92—Jonah Mudd, the Mascot of Hoodooville; or, Which Was Which? By Fred Thorpe.
93—Fighting the Seminoles; or, Harry Emerson's Red Friend. By Maj. Herbert H. Clyde.
94—The Young Outlaw; or, Adrift in the Streets. By Horatio Alger, Jr.
95—The Pass of Ghosts; or, A Yankee Boy in the Far West. By Cornelius Shea.
96—The Fortunes of a Foundling; or, Dick, the Outcast. By Ralph Ranger.
97—The Hunt for the Talisman; or, The Fortunes of the Gold Grab Mine. By J. M. Merrill.
98—Mystic Island. The Tale of a Hidden Treasure. By the author of "The Wreck of the *Glaucus*."
99—Capt. Startle; or, The Terror of the Black Range. By Cornelius Shea.
100—Julius, the Street Boy; or, A Waif's Rise from Poverty. By Horatio Alger, Jr.
101—Shanghaied; or, A Wanderer Against His Will. By H. C. Emmet.
102—Luke Jepson's Treachery; or, The Dwarfs of the Pacific. By the author of "The Wreck of the *Glaucus*."
103—Tangled Trails; or, The Mystery of the Manville Fortune. By Clifford Park.
104—James, Langley & Co.; or, The Boy Miners of Salt River. By the author of "Capt. Startle."
105—Ben Barclay's Courage; or, The Fortunes of a Store Boy. By Horatio Alger, Jr.
106—Fred Desmond's Mission; or, The Cruise of the "Explorer." By Cornelius Shea.
107—Tom Pinkney's Fortune; or, Around the World with Nellie Bly. By Lieut. Clyde.
108—Detective Clinket's Investigations; or, The Mystery of the Severed Hand. By Clifford Park.
109—In the Depths of the Dark Continent; or, The Vengeance of Van Vincent. By the author of "The Wreck of the 'Glaucus.'"
110—Barr, the Detective; or, The Peril of Lucy Gray. By Thomas P. Montfort.
111—A Bandit of Costa Rica; or, The Story of a Stranded Circus. By Cornelius Shea.
112—Dacey Dearborn's Difficulties; or, The Struggle of the Rival Detectives. By Clifford Park.
113—Ben Folsom's Courage; or, How Pluck Won Out. By Fred Thorpe.
114—Daring Dick Goodloe's Apprenticeship; or, The Fortunes of a Young Newspaper Reporter. By Phil Willoughby.
115—Bowery Bill, the Wharf Rat; or, The Young Street Arab's Vow. By Ed. S. Wheeler.
116—A Fight for a Sweetheart; or, The Romance of Young Dave Mansard. By Cornelius Shea.
117—Col. Mysteria; or, The Tracking of a Criminal to His Grave. By Launce Poyntz.
118—Electric Bob's Sea Cat; or, The Daring Invasion of Death Valley. By Robert T. Toombs.
119—The Great Water Mystery; or, The Adventures of Paul Hassard. By Matt Royal.
120—The Electric Man in the Enchanted Valley; or, The Wonderful Adventures of Two Boy Inventors. By the author of "The Wreck of the 'Glaucus.'"
121—Capt. Cyclone, Bandit; or, Pursued by an Electric Man. By the author of "The Wreck of the 'Glaucus.'"
122—Lester Orton's Legacy; or, The Story of the Treasure Belt. By Clifford Park.
123—The Luck of a Four-Leaf Clover; or, The Reunited Twins. By Cornelius Shea.
124—Dandy Rex; or, An American Boy's Adventures in Spain. By Marline Manly.
125—The Mad Hermit of the Swamps; or, Ned Hawley's Quest. By W. B. Lawson.
126—Fred Morden's Rich Reward; or, The Rescue of a Millionaire. By Matt Royal.

All of the above numbers always on hand. If you cannot get them from your newsdealer, five cents per copy will bring them to you by mail, postpaid.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK

University of South Florida
Digital Commons @ University of South Florida

DIGITAL COMMONS
@ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Young Rough Riders Weekly

Dime Novel Collections

May 1903

The young rough rider's silent foe, or, The hermit of Satan's Gulch

Edward C. Taylor

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/young_rough_riders

Recommended Citation
Taylor, Edward C., "The young rough rider's silent foe, or, The hermit of Satan's Gulch" (1903). *Young Rough Riders Weekly*. 8.
https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/young_rough_riders/8

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Dime Novel Collections at Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. It has been accepted for inclusion in Young Rough Riders Weekly by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ University of South Florida. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@usf.edu.